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Why am I a Cumberland
Presbyterian?

WHY AM I

A CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN?

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"We also believe, and therefore speak."—PAUL.

"And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."—PETER.

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WHY AM I A CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN?

In our Christian life we find a perpetual conflict. This is not the place for pointing out the nature of that conflict, or describing the sources from which it arises. The conflict itself is a matter of experience and observation. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Persecution comes from wicked or misguided men. We have, moreover, enemies within, as well as without. *Satan, too, goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* We need all the aids which we can procure. We need the sympathy, counsel, prayers, and coöperation of society. We are to *bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.* God, in his providence, has established a visible Church upon the earth. For reasons which we cannot explain, he

has permitted this great spiritual family to be divided into different subordinate families. Of course, in establishing our relations to the Church for ourselves, a choice is to be made. We select one family, one branch of the Church, rather than another. We have reasons for such a choice. These reasons may be wise and weighty; on the other hand, they may deserve but little consideration; still they are reasons with *us*. We consider our action intelligent, and they are reasons which influence that action.

I. CONSIDERATIONS WHICH ARE APT TO INFLUENCE US IN ATTACHING OURSELVES TO A PARTICULAR CHURCH.

In forming our relations to the Church, it is no doubt true that most persons are led at first by what are called accidental circumstances. We should rather call them providential than accidental. We are born and raised under a particular set of influences; we are educated into particular prejudices; these prejudices become stronger with our habits of thought, and as years multiply; finally, we are brought under religious impressions by a particular class of men; our hearts are warm; we love them; we feel that we owe them

a sort of spiritual debt; they are our spiritual fathers, and it is the most natural thing in the world that we should feel like identifying ourselves with them in ecclesiastical relation. Any or all of these circumstances may be expected to have their influence upon the early Christian life of men and women in forming their religious associations, and in shaping their future course.

I may be allowed, too, to add—what is often doubtless true — that in establishing these hallowed associations we are influenced by the state of society around us. A motive of this kind has more of calculation in it. We spontaneously condemn it. It seems very much like a trafficking in sacred things. Still, much as we may condemn and deplore it, such motives have their influence. A particular denomination of Christians is more wealthy, more numerous, more aristocratic, more fashionable; another is more persistent in efforts to multiply its membership—after the manner of the scribes and Pharisees, *compassing sea and land to make a single proselyte.* There are classes of minds upon which all these considerations will have their influence. Such minds will be led by what appears to be the strength of numbers, by

the glitter of wealth, by imposing titles, by the prospect of greater freedom from restraint in their premeditated Christian life, or by an appearance of deep earnestness and sincerity on the part of those who invite them into Christian fellowship.

We may conclude, therefore, that the mass of men are not moved primarily by what we call principle in the establishment of their early Christian associations. They become Christians before they become theologians. In most cases they become Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, or Roman Catholics, before they know with any degree of distinctness what those terms mean. But a time arrives with most men—it arrives with all religious teachers—in which they ought to understand principles, and to be governed by them. They ought to understand for themselves the great truths which the Scriptures teach. Teachers should be able to teach these truths, and willing to conform their lives to them. I would not, however, exempt even ordinary Christians from such an obligation. They, too, should be *ready to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them with meekness and fear.* The Bible is in our hands; it con-

tains the message of life; it prescribes the conditions of salvation. These are subjects of infinite moment to us. Why should we not study the Bible? We ought to be intelligent and practical Christians; we ought to understand as distinctly as possible the ground upon which we stand. Do we not stand or fall for *ourselves* to our Master?

We may allow that truth is deeply mixed with error in some of our Churches—perhaps, to some extent, in all of them. In our most earnest investigations we may be misled—may make mistakes; still we are to bear in mind that it is *truth alone which makes us free.* It is the truth *which pierceth even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.* A part of our Saviour's prayer was: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." No man deserves any respect as a religious teacher who does not seek the truth with an earnest, unwearying effort. How can any one, whether a public teacher or not, dare to be ignorant of that holy science whose guiding light is to conduct him through the darkness of this world to a world of light and life above? Is not every thing at stake?

II. PRESBYTERIANISM: WHY IT IS PREFERABLE AS A FORM OF CHURCH ORDER.

I am here to give some of my reasonings and thoughts, as I stand connected with a particular branch of the Church. Why am I a Cumberland Presbyterian? Do I understand myself? There is a question, however, subordinate to the main question. I propose first briefly to consider this: Why am I a Presbyterian at all? This question has no relation to theology; it involves simply the subject of Church order.

1. The Presbyterian order or form of government is preferable. I overlook here the scriptural aspect of Church-government. The Scriptures give us valuable suggestions on this subject; but in so brief a discussion as this is intended to be, I treat it in a strictly practical manner. Church-government is one of the aids of religion; it is useful for edification. The Presbyterian form of Church-government is not a monarchy; nor is it a democracy. It is free from the evils of both. Prelacy gives too much power to the prelate. Moreover, in all its forms of development, whether in the Papal Church, or in Episcopalianism, tech-

nically so called, it theoretically, and to a large extent practically, places a priesthood between a suppliant sinner and the hope of salvation. In the Papal Communion, at least, the priesthood are considered and *felt* to hold the keys of the kingdom. Episcopalianism, fully developed, seems to approach very closely to the same ground. The principle is in conflict with all the teachings of our Saviour. It is true, he promised the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter. He had a meaning in that promise which is not to be lightly considered; but he also taught universally that true religion consisted in a particular state of mind and heart toward himself, toward God, and toward our fellow-men. All these teachings are certainly unequivocal, distinct, and pregnant of meaning. They settle the question that our religion is strictly a personal matter—a matter to be settled between God and our own souls, independent of any mediatorship on the part of man. We have one Mediator, and one only. The ministry are useful and important for guidance and edification, and God has been gracious in committing so great a treasure as his gospel to "earthen vessels." It is well, however, for us to remem-

ber that the Pope and the priesthood, and the whole range of the ministry, are but "earthen vessels." But let it be borne in mind that "every one of us shall give account of *himself* to God."

Episcopacy, as it has been modified, even in the Methodist Church, is objectionable, inasmuch as it takes the selection of pastors from the people and gives it to the superintending bishop. This system of government has the merit of vigor. It is an energetic government, but is not favorable to freedom, nor to the fullest Christian development.

An unmodified democracy, whether ecclesiastical or civil, is objectionable. It is too loose, is liable to factions; it is wanting in vigor and concentration. In such a democratic Church it is almost impossible to arrest the progress of heresy and disorder. The Congregationalism of New England is an illustration. From the strictest and sternest orthodoxy it is considered to have become almost incurably affected with religious error. Unitarianism is one of its fruits.

Presbyterianism is a representative democracy. Ruling elders are chosen by the people whom they serve. Ministers are ordained in conformity with petitions from the people, who select them to the

pastorate. All other pastors are chosen by the people of their pastorates. The officers of the Church are permanent in their tenure of office. This gives them the advantage of experience; in the exercise, however, of their office, they are dependent upon the will of the people whom they serve. Permanency, experience, and the popular will, are as fully combined in this system as it is perhaps possible to combine them in the administration of government. In the highest judicature of the Presbyterian Churches in this country, the members are elective, and the ministry and laity are equally represented. These judicatures judge of all appeals; settle all questions of order and doctrine; constitute the bond of union, peace, correspondence, and mutual confidence amongst all the congregations of the respective denominations. The humblest member can be heard there; his grievances can be redressed; his doubts and difficulties considered by an assembly of the most experienced, the wisest, and best men in the Church to which he belongs. This system of government is not free from evils. Nothing is free from evils which has any connection with human passion; still, it certainly embodies as many advantages,

and as few evils, as can be expected from any system of administration conducted by frail and fallible men.

2. Presbyterianism is favorable to human freedom. From the nature of the system itself, this would be supposed to be true. A mode of Church-government, under which the people are accustomed to selecting their own rulers and teachers, affords a training for the exercise of self-government. Presbyterians are taught from their childhood to govern themselves. Presbyterianism is an improved republicanism. We find facts to be in conformity with what we would expect. In the great struggle for American independence, the Presbyterians were the first movers. I quote a passage from Bancroft. After describing the hardships and struggles of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in Ireland, the land of their first adoption, the historian gives us the following:

"They were willing to quit a soil which was endeared to them by no traditions; and the American colonies opened their arms to receive them. They began to change their abode as soon as they felt oppression; and every successive period of discontent swelled the tide of emigrants.

Just after the peace of Paris, 'the Heart-of-Oak' Protestants of Ulster, weary of strife with their landlords, came over in great numbers; and settlements on the Catawba, in South Carolina, dated from that epoch. At different times in the eighteenth century some had found homes in New England, but they were most numerous south of New York, from New Jersey to Georgia. In Pennsylvania, they peopled many counties, till, in public life, they already balanced the influence of the Quakers. In Virginia, they went up the Valley of the Shenandoah; and they extended themselves along the tributaries of the Catawba, in the beautiful upland region of North Carolina. Their training in Ireland had kept the spirit of liberty, and the readiness to resist unjust government, as fresh in their hearts as though they had just been listening to the preaching of Knox, or musing over the political creed of the Westminster Assembly. They brought to America no submissive love for England; and their experience and their religion alike bade them meet oppression with prompt resistance. We shall find the first voice publicly raised in America to dissolve all connection with Great Britain came, not from the Puri-

tans of New England, or the Dutch of New York, or the planters of Virginia, but from *Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.*" *

Accordingly, we find that the first blood which was shed in defense of American liberty, was shed on Alamance Creek, in North Carolina, in 1771; and in 1775, one month after the battle of Lexington, and thirteen and a half months before the Declaration of Independence by the Congress of the Colonies, the celebrated Mecklenburg Resolutions were passed, of which the following are the second and third:

"That we, the citizens of Mecklenburg county, do hereby dissolve the political bonds which have connected us with the mother country, and hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British Crown, and abjure all political connection, contract, or association with that nation, who have so wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties, and inhumanly shed the blood of American patriots at Lexington.

"That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people; are, and of right ought

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*History of the United States.

to be, a sovereign and self-governing association, under the control of no power other than that of our God, and the General Government of the Congress: to the maintenance of which independence we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual coöperation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor." *

The men who gave spirit to the Mecklenburg meeting, and controlled its proceedings, were descendants of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who left Ireland to escape the oppressions of the mother country. They were themselves, too, Presbyterians of the "straitest sect."

I cannot forbear the remark at this point, that during the first fifteen years of its existence nine-tenths of the membership of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and an equal proportion of its ministry, were derived from the descendants of these same Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.

In the trying war of the Revolution, no class of men supported more ardently what were considered the rights of the colonies than the members of the Presbyterian Church. In this sup-

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* Foote's Sketches of North Carolina.

port they were led by their ministers. Witherspoon was a member of the National Congress, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence; Hall, of North Carolina, commanded a regiment, and served as their chaplain at the same time. In the midst of a battle, James Caldwell carried the hymn-books from his own church, and scattered them among the patriots, that the paper might serve as wadding for their guns. A volume might be filled with illustrations. A King of England said that Presbyterianism was not a "religion for a gentleman." He meant that Presbyterianism was not adapted to the court of a king, or to the heartless pretensions of a monarchy. He understood himself, and his decision was correct. Presbyterianism is not a religion for an unscrupulous courtier.

3. Presbyterianism encourages, in the widest sense of the expression, freedom of thought. This is so to such an extent, that it may be denominated as preëminently an intellectual religion. We have a system of religion which appeals to the authority of the Church. It would, in a great measure, substitute authority for the Scriptures. This, of course, would make extended investiga-

tion unnecessary. This system may train us to an implicit faith. It uses means, too, to captivate our senses and our imaginations. It is superstitious and sensuous. The intellect and the heart are in a great measure overlooked. We have another system, which claims to administer the ordinances of the gospel by an exclusive and divine right. In settling the question of this right, we are compelled to go far beyond the Bible. According to this system, the ordinances under such an administration have a sort of mysterious and spiritual efficacy, which under every other administration they fail to have. Formalism, and a reliance upon the exterior, rather than spirituality, are leading characteristics of this system. Another system teaches us that the initiatory ordinance of the Church is almost, if not quite, every thing. If I am thoroughly washed by a lineal descendant of John the Baptist, I am in the right way. Hardly any thing can be received as a compensation for the want of this washing. It is true that it does not entirely overlook other things, but from the manner in which the subject is presented, we cannot escape the impression that it attaches undue importance to what is cer-

tainly a sign, and not a substance. Furthermore under some modifications of this system, it is certainly difficult for a candid inquirer to resist the conviction that the initiatory ordinance is considered as absolutely *every thing*. Such a religion might be denominated a religion of ordinances. We have still another system which appeals largely to the mere affections and impulses of the heart. It has led thousands to the kingdom of God; but that it should command the judgments of the far-reaching and investigating mind, is hardly to be expected.

A Presbyterian is taught, from the commencement of his Christian career, to exercise his mind in deep thought; to busy himself with some of the most profound and difficult questions in theology and metaphysics. If he is true to the principles of his doctrinal profession, he becomes a habitual thinker. He receives nothing upon trust —nothing as a substitute for the truth, and he looks for truth in the Bible. With him the Scriptures, and the Scriptures alone, are *the infallible rule of faith and practice*. I speak thus of a Presbyterian who understands himself, who conforms to the true developments of his system. He

may not always think correctly, but, nevertheless, he is taught to think. His religion, whilst it does not overlook the heart, may be denominated as largely a religion of the intellect. I have said that his religion *does not overlook the heart.* Still, this is the point of danger with him. From the very nature of his system of thought and training, he is liable to the error of depressing the religion of the heart, and looking unduly to that which elevates the intellect. We shall see that Cumberland Presbyterians have endeavored to avoid such an error. *Practically*, this effort is more distinctive than any thing else with them.

4. Presbyterianism is a government of elders. It is not pretended here that the form of Church-government from which we may not depart is presented in the New Testament; still, if any thing on this subject is presented there for our guidance, it is a government of elders. Two terms are used to describe the office of those who ruled—Πρεσβύτερος, Elder, and Ἐπίσκοπος, Bishop. Hardly any thing is more obvious than that these two terms, in the language of the New Testament, are interchangeable. The elders, or bishops, governed, or ruled; the government was not, therefore, a de-

mocracy. The *elders*, or *bishops*, governed, or ruled. If the terms elder and bishop are interchangeable, Presbyterianism and Episcopacy would be interchangeable. Therefore, the New Testament does not, even by example, authorize Prelacy, which is the modern form of Episcopacy. As far, however, as example may be considered authority, Presbyterianism is authorized. Example is certainly the only scriptural authority which we have. The conclusion, then, comes that Presbyterianism is the only form of Church for which we have scriptural authority of any kind.

III. THE MAIN QUESTION.

But the main question is, Why am I a Cumberland Presbyterian? I am a Presbyterian. I belong to the general Presbyterian family. But why do I belong to this particular family of Presbyterians?

1. This question has a historical aspect. I express myself respectfully. In the opinions presented here, I am governed by my own interpretation of the providence of God.

First. I have always regarded the existence of

the Cumberland Presbyterian Church as a providential necessity. When this South-western country was settled, the prevailing type of religious preference was Presbyterian. This is unquestionable. The mass of the settlers were from Upper Virginia and North Carolina, where Presbyterianism prevailed. There were few Methodists, few Baptists, and no Episcopalians or Roman Catholics. When the great revival developed itself, it appeared chiefly in connection with the labors of Presbyterian ministers. Thousands were brought into the Church; congregations were multiplied all over the land. From the slow process and limited means, at that time, of training Presbyterian ministers, it was soon found impossible to supply the new congregations with the word and the ordinances of the gospel. The friends and promoters of the revival felt that a necessity—a plain, providential necessity—was upon them, of setting apart men to the work of the ministry whose literary and theological attainments were below the standards of the Presbyterian Church. They yielded to the necessity, and this circumstance, together with theological difficulties which arose about the same time, led to the organization

of what has become the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The Cumberland Presbytery was constituted, or rather reconstituted, in 1810. The history is familiar. I do not propose to trace it. Facts show that it was necessary to create a nucleus, such as the Cumberland Presbytery presented, or to leave the most precious fruits of a great and good work uncared for, as sheep everywhere without a shepherd. What were good and conscientious men to do? Thousands were perishing for the bread of life, and yet asking it at their hands. Were these thousands to be neglected? Was a deaf ear to be turned to their calls? Were promising congregations, which had been gathered by the labors and self-denial of those men, to be given up to every selfish agency and distracting influence which might obtrude themselves upon them? It was a painful attitude in which they stood. The whole history shows that they felt this painfulness deeply; that they were loyal in heart to the Presbyterian Church; that their preference was to remain in it; and that they would have done so, could they have been permitted to fulfill the mission in peace which God, in his providence, had so manifestly committed to them, and

to which their suffering congregations and perishing thousands were calling them.

Allow me to state, too, that the men who constituted the Cumberland Presbytery stood, constitutionally, upon as high ground as the Presbyterian Church offers. They were regularly licensed and ordained ministers. No charge of heresy had ever been regularly preferred against them. On the score of morality, they were above suspicion. No men in the South-west stood, in this respect, in a fairer light before the Presbyterian Church, or before the world.

Secondly. Allusion has been made briefly to the providential aspect of the origin of the Church: what are the providential indications of its history since its organization? Its origin was obscure; its pretensions were moderate. There was no flourish of trumpets. It had none of the advantages of wealth, of literary culture, or of worldly influence. But what has been its history? *A little one has become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.* From one it has multiplied into a hundred Presbyteries; from three ministers into about twelve hundred; and from the scattered and discouraged congregations which adhered to the

Presbytery at first, to a membership of a hundred and twenty thousand. And it has acquired all this increase without driving the plowshare of division through the congregations of other departments of the Church; it has made its increase, not by proselyting, and thus producing disorganization and confusion in society, but from the great world. It has not built on other men's foundations; it has not reaped where other men had sown; it has laid its own foundation; it has sown its own seed. It has, by its labors, contributed thousands to the building up of other Churches, whilst it may have received its tens in return. These statements are made in no vainglorious spirit; they are simple facts, with which our friends, and our enemies, too, if we have them, ought to be acquainted. Are there no providential indications in such a history? I retrace the steps of an experience reaching through fifty years. It goes back to within ten years of the organization of the Church. I call to mind scores of the best men and women that I have ever known—a generation of believers of whom the world was not worthy. The most of that generation have passed away. I recognize their names on the

grave-stones in almost every burying-place in the land. But they died in the faith. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was their spiritual and nursing mother. Has this Church lived and labored in vain?

Thirdly. Has the Cumberland Presbyterian Church fulfilled its mission as a distinct member of the great sisterhood of American Churches? Is it ready for disintegration and absorption into other Communions? What do its present aspects indicate? It is more earnestly engaged in the work of education than it has ever been. It is outstripped by no Christian denomination in the South-west in this work. In the North-west, too, and farther East, under the shadow of the Alleghany Mountains, and in the far West, on the Pacific coast, it is quietly, but surely, building up institutions of learning. Its religious periodicals are of the highest character. It is organizing its pastoral work more thoroughly than ever before. This looks to permanency. In the work of publication, in the midst of many discouragements, it is still struggling upward. Its missionary work is greatly embarrassed from the late troubles of the country, but still is not to be despised. We

have passed through the war a united people. The terrible ordeal, which has scorched and blasted others, has scarcely singed a thread of our garments. Is there not a living spirit in such a people? Has God forsaken them, or will he do so? Has he no farther work for them? Believe it who can. The truth is, a wider field for effort and promised usefulness is spread out before them at this moment than was ever presented before. If they had a thousand ministers of proper spirit and qualifications, those ministers could all be employed; they could not only be employed, but supported. I ask again, Has the mission of such a people been fulfilled? Is there no farther space in God's great vineyard for them? I do not so interpret the providences of God.

Fourthly. Will the writer be permitted, without being considered as violating the laws of delicacy, to allude briefly to his own experience? Providentially, he was brought personally, and, as he hopes, experimentally, under the influence of religion by the agency of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Its earnest ministry presented the truth effectively, as he hopes, to his heart. By the same agency he was directed to Christ.

His trembling footsteps were skillfully guided in the most perilous exigency of his spiritual history. I would not limit the power and goodness of God; he might have found other agencies for the accomplishment of this work. When I consider, however, all the circumstances of the case, I do not know what those agencies could have been. Thousands of persons in the South-west, fifty years ago, were brought under religious influence by the same agency, and doubtless converted to God, who could hardly have been reached in any other manner. Is there nothing in all this? Are such providences of God without meaning? His providences are often difficult to be understood; but it seems to me that I can easily understand the import of such lessons as I here detail. God had a work for the Church which his own providence brought into existence. He makes no mistakes in his appointments. May not one especially, who has been so highly distinguished by the grace of our God, be allowed to *thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled him, for that he counted him faithful, putting him into the ministry?* How could he turn his back upon his spiritual mother? How could he forget those good men who laid their hands upon his

head, in his early manhood, and, by the authority of Christ, bade him, "Go, preach a precious gospel to wandering, dying men"? Is this Church debased, besotted, the patroness of error and sin? If I found it thus, however hard the struggle might be, I should feel compelled to turn my back. But I find no such thing. She is an earnest, self-denying, and devoted Church yet. The fire which was kindled in her youth still burns upon her altars; she still proclaims those truths which turned this wilderness into a fruitful field. "Then if I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

IV. MEASURES.

Something may be said on the subject of *measures*. I use the term in its sense of means for the promotion of the interests of religion. The great measure, in every branch of the Church, for the conversion and edification of men, is the preaching of the truth. The truth is the sword of the Spirit. The apostle calls it "the word of God." The word is the truth. By the truth we are

made free. By the truth we are to be sanctified. The Spirit of God is the spirit of truth. We are to commend "ourselves by manifestation of the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God." We are to speak "the truth in love." We are chosen "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and *belief of the truth*." We are to purify our "souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." All these scriptural expressions indicate very clearly the paramount importance of the truth in the great work of promoting the salvation of men. The truth is, in a paramount sense, a means. It is embodied in the word; it is presented and urged by a consecrated ministry, and rendered effectual by the Spirit of God. But there are subordinate means—measures adopted by the Church in coöperation with the Spirit in the promotion of the interests of truth.

1. Cumberland Presbyterians encourage and labor for revivals of religion. Other Churches, it is true, do the same thing. Still, it may be said, I trust, without offense—at least, it should be said without offense—that this measure is characteristic in a higher degree of this Church than of the ordinary Churches of the country. I

have said that Cumberland Presbyterians *labor for revivals of religion.* It is intended to make the expression significant. They do not merely improve and encourage them when God in his sovereign goodness sends them, but they labor and pray for them as dispensations which God may be expected to grant in consideration of earnest labor, and faithful and persevering prayer. Has not God said, "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain"? He has also said, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Can we misunderstand such scriptures? McGready and his people sought and labored for a revival. The history of their Church covenant is familiar. They made a revival of God's work a subject of special prayer. They did not propose to originate that work themselves, but the covenanted prayer was, that *God* would revive his work. They prayed for this as men pray for the conversion of sinners, or for the pardon of their own sins. God heard and answered. Just so Cumberland Presbyterians labor and pray now. It is a distinguishing characteristic. We would hardly expect it to be other-

wise. The Church originated in the most extensive revival that ever occurred upon the continent. As I have said, this holy fire still burns upon her altars.

2. The standard of ministerial qualification is practical; it is adapted to the wants of the country. It will be borne in mind that this was one of the subjects which created the difficulties that developed themselves into the formation of this Church. I desire therefore to express myself the more thoughtfully. Let the writer say, then, that he will go as far as any reasonable man in favor of a highly educated ministry. He has been laboring to this end for thirty-five years. Plainly, however, different times and circumstances require different degrees of ministerial preparation. I speak of scholastic preparation. A standard adapted to its times, and to the wants of a people, is a practical standard. Every man who pretends to be a religious teacher should have, at least, a decent education in the ordinary sciences, and in the language and literature of his own country. It is a reproach to religion that any man should think of assuming the sacred office without such a preparation as this. Still, it is true, that to educate a ministry universally up to the highest edu-

cational standard of the country is impracticable. The wants of the world would not wait on us, should we make the attempt. This remark is particularly applicable to past times in this part of the country. It is partially applicable to all times. Whilst we need men who can stand anywhere, and meet error and irreligion when they come indorsed by the highest pretensions to learning and science, we also need men who will go out "into the streets and lanes of the city;" "into the highways and hedges, and compel" the outcasts to come in. Who will preach to the lowly countryman in the retired school-house, or in his own unpretending home? Who will follow the hardy pioneer into the remote wilderness, and break to him and his neighbors the bread of life? We reflect upon the labors and self-denial of some of the fathers of this Church, and we are astonished. God needed such men, and he called them. They were men for their times. A practical Church will always keep its eye on the times, the wants of the age, as age follows age, and adapt itself to these in all its requirements and measures. I mean by these, of course, such requirements and measures as the Scriptures do not prescribe. Where the

Scriptures speak, we are to conform; where we are left to our own discretion, we are to exercise our discretion wisely. As far as measures were concerned, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church grew up out of an attempt to apply this principle. The men whom the organization saved to the interests of religion would have been an ornament to any age or people. The principle has no doubt been too loosely applied in some cases. If errors have been committed, however, time and experience will bring the correctives. We are willing to commit the future to the providence of God, and to the wisdom of those who shall succeed us.

3. I present a specimen of the results of the application of an inflexible rule relating to ministerial qualification. Without intending to be offensive, I use the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches as illustrations. The county in which the writer lives is dotted throughout its whole extent with Methodist, and Baptist, and Cumberland Presbyterian congregations. Good men are preaching to these people from Sabbath to Sabbath. The labors of such men are bringing hundreds every year to the knowledge of the truth. In the same county are two Presbyterian congregations, organized

about the commencement of the present century, made up of beloved and good people; but neither of these congregations has been able, for twenty-five years, to support a pastor. In the county there is neither an Episcopalian congregation nor minister. This may be regarded as a specimen of the religious condition of a large portion of the South-west. In the cities and large towns these Churches have settled ministers, and their ministers have collected congregations. Now I will allow that in such localities these Churches are fulfilling a good and useful mission; but I seriously and earnestly propound the question with all due respect, When, or how, with such facilities as they have been furnishing for sixty years, would the great mass of the people of this country be supplied with the means of salvation? This is a practical question, and ought to be answered. Can these denominations answer it? They have influence where they labor; they have learning; they have social position to be desired; they have money; without doubt they have their share of piety, too; but I repeat, and press the question, What would have been the spiritual condition of the two past generations in the West and South-

west if these Churches had been their only hope for the means of spiritual life? I present another question: Can any system of administration fulfill the mission of the Church which, either theoretically or from the necessities of its practical workings, overlooks the wants of the great masses of mankind? Who will say that these are irrelevant questions?

4. Let me be understood, however, upon this subject of ministerial qualification. That is the best ministration which brings most men to the knowledge of the truth, and to practical holiness; and that is the best system of ministerial training which leads most certainly to such a result. I know well enough that neither ignorance nor coarseness can produce any good thing. The ignoramus ought to be content with his proper level, or to labor with manly energy to raise himself above it. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church is now furnishing abundant and liberal means of ministerial culture. Our young men ought to be ashamed not to avail themselves of these means. For myself, if I had my preparation for this work to make, as I had it to make fifty years ago, I would lay a deep and broad founda-

tion; I would "buy the truth," at whatever cost of labor and self-denial; I would endeavor to make myself, in the fullest sense of the injunction, *a workman who should not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* Now, however, as I have said, I am willing to commit all to a good Providence, and to the counsel of those who, I hope, will be wiser and better men than their predecessors.

5. A distinguishing characteristic of Cumberland Presbyterian preaching has been the earnestness and the closeness with which a personal religious experience has been pressed upon the hearts of men as an absolute necessity. If one subject has been prominent above all others in our pulpits, it has been the subject of the new birth. Every minister in the Church has, perhaps, at some time or other, preached upon the impressive text furnished by our Saviour: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This characteristic has been inherited from the fathers of the Church. The necessity of the new birth was the great truth which took the deepest hold upon McGready's heart. It was this truth, powerfully presented, which moved the heart of the Church, and drove thousands

from a dead formalism, and a false security, to a thorough reëxamination of their spiritual state. It is not necessary to dwell upon the results of such reëxaminations; they are matters of both history and tradition. It is possible that Cumberland Presbyterian ministers have sometimes erred in presenting and urging certain particular exercises and affections as an absolute experience in all cases. Serious and honest inquirers may be thus discouraged. There is another danger. Religion is sometimes presented as a sort of ordeal to be passed in conversion. The impression is liable to be made that but little more is required to be experienced or done. Still, to insist upon the leading truth; to urge persistently that men *must be born again*—must become *new creatures*—must be *born of the Spirit;* that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord;* that the change from sin to holiness is a personal experience, vital, and in ordinary cases sensible, is the plain duty of every minister who would take the Saviour and his apostles as models. Certainly we have no ministers amongst us who are more earnest and faithful in presenting these great truths than Cumberland Presbyterians. I desire to be

thoughtful in my statements, but state, nevertheless, that I do not think them even equaled in this respect by any ministry in the country. No class of men are more furiously assailed by those who denounce all pretensions to experimental religion as folly and fanaticism. This is an index of the estimate in which their earnestness and power are held by opposers. They are experimental preachers. Even their error, to which I have alluded—if such is allowed to be an error—is an error on the side of safety. Its tendency is to drive to a closer and more searching self-examination. The importance of this can hardly be overestimated. It has doubtless saved thousands.

THE LEADING ASPECT OF THE QUESTION ITS THEOLOGICAL ASPECT.

But the leading aspect of the question which we are now considering is its theological aspect. Whatever may be useful in Church order, true in history, or practical in measures, is all uselessly urged, unless it appear that the object of the organization of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is to promote the truth, as God has revealed it to men. We may be zealous and efficient in pro-

moting falsehood. Our very zeal and efficiency render us the more dangerous. What is the theology of this Church? What does it teach? Does it derive its doctrines from the *traditions or commandments of men*, from *philosophy falsely so called*, or from the Scriptures? I propose a very brief but candid examination of this subject in some of its most vital parts. My examination may involve what seems to be polemic. It is not intended, however, to be polemic. As I have said, I present a few of the *most vital doctrines* of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. I shall aim to do this kindly and respectfully. Let these doctrines be examined. If they are not according to truth, let them be rejected. If, however, they are according to truth, we are right in being what we are, by whatever name we may be called. The world, therefore, must tolerate us, because God will certainly do so.

I. GOD, HIS CHARACTER, AND THE MODE OF HIS EXISTENCE.

1. We commence at the foundation of all religion. There is nothing distinctive in this, but

it is necessary as a first link in our chain. There is one God, and one only. "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord." Thus Israel was taught by Moses, and the lesson was repeated by the Saviour. "I am God, and there is none else." "I am God, and there is none like me." "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me." An acknowledgment of the existence of God is a primary article in every religious creed; the acknowledgment of the unity of God, in every creed which deserves to be mentioned.

2. "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."* "There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffer-

*Catechism.

ing; abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty."* The apostle says: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." The intelligent worship of such a being as is here described must have a good moral and spiritual effect upon the worshiper.

3. "There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."† The apostle represents the subject thus: "There are three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." Our Saviour directed that baptism should be administered "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The apostolic benediction is pronounced in the name of the same three persons: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all

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*Confession of Faith. †Catechism.

Amen." We receive the doctrine of the Trinity as a matter of faith, not pretending to explain it. It is taught in the Scriptures. We can see great and glorious reasons why the Divine Being should have existed in this manner. We accept with gratitude and admiration what the Scriptures teach on this subject, and forbear to press our inquiries farther. We remember the language of the patriarch: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." We are not surprised at finding profound and unfathomable mysteries in the mode in which the Infinite One exists. An extended argument might be made on the subject, but this is not the place for it.

II. DECREES OF GOD.

"God did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, determine to bring to pass what should be for his own glory.

"God has not decreed any thing respecting his

creature man contrary to his revealed will or written word, which declares his sovereignty over all his creatures, the ample provision he has made for their salvation, his determination to punish the finally impenitent with everlasting destruction, and to save the true believer with an everlasting salvation." *

"The decrees of God are his purpose, whereby, according to the counsel of his own will, he hath foreördained to bring to pass what shall be for his own glory: sin not being for God's glory, therefore he hath not decreed it." †

These passages deserve some notice.

1. God decreed to bring to pass what shall be for his own glory. We would have expected this. An intelligent being would not act without purpose or design. No serious and thoughtful man intends, or purposes deliberately and unnecessarily, to dishonor and degrade himself. Much less would we expect such a purpose on the part of God. Our impression upon this subject is strengthened when we consider that the greatest happiness of his creatures brings the greatest

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* Confession of Faith. † Catechism.

glory to himself. The greatest honor, and even the greatest satisfaction of a parent, unless he is destitute of the feelings of a parent, are derived from the prosperity and happiness of his children. The same principle is illustrated in the case of a great and good ruler. His greatest glory and happiness are derived from the prosperity and happiness of his people. From all we know of God, we are sure it is thus with him. His greatest glory and satisfaction arise from the happiness of his creatures.

2. But sin is not "for God's glory, therefore he hath not decreed it." God has not decreed the existence of sin. Sin is ruinous to his creatures, and for this reason, in addition to a thousand others, it is dishonoring to God. Sin is in conflict with the nature of God; it is in conflict with every motive by which we could conceive of his being actuated; it is in conflict with all the requirements of his word. How, then, can we admit that he decreed the existence of sin? How can we admit that contradictory purposes exist in his mind at the same time? How can we admit that he determined, or rather predetermined, his own glory, and, at the same time, the existence of

sin, when they are in direct conflict with one another?

3. But sin exists. Therefore some things exist which God did not decree; or if we choose to call sin an occurrence, some things occur, the occurrence of which God did not determine. I use the latter form of expression in order to adapt myself to a particular theory of the metaphysical nature of sin. God does not will every thing which is willed; does not do every thing which is done. Man has a will as well as God; his will is as essentially free as the will of God. It cannot take so wide a range as the will of God. One reason is, that the knowledge of God is infinitely more extended than the knowledge of man; but within the range of objects to which it may be directed, the will of man is as essentially free as the will of God. I speak with reverence, but what I say is true. Then God may choose one thing and man may choose another, and may develop his choice into action in conflict with the will of God. God overlooks, and may overrule, man's wrong choice and action, and turn them aside from their object. He overlooks and overrules every thing which is purposed and done. He

makes the wrath of man to praise him, and *restrains the remainder of the wrath*, but does not himself either purpose or bring about the wrath. A good and wise ruler overlooks his charge, encourages the obedient, restrains the disobedient, punishes offenders, and by their punishment strengthens his own authority, and makes himself more efficient for good. By these latter measures he makes disobedience and sin contribute to a good end; but he did not purpose or plan the disobedience and sin. He did not need them. God exercises a good and gracious providence over the affairs of men, but he does not decree the existence of sin. How could a good ruler purpose, or bring about, rebellion on the part of his subjects?

4. "God has not decreed any thing respecting his creature man contrary to his revealed will or written word." It is true Moses says, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Does Moses intend to teach that there may be purposes in the Divine mind contrary to those revealed in the Scriptures? Such a supposition would imply a frightful charge against the

Almighty. Certainly no serious man would make such a charge. Double-dealing and falsehood are the resorts of weakness. But there is no weakness in God. He fears no responsibility which may arise from speaking the truth, and the whole truth, as far as it may be needful to us. There are, doubtless, purposes in the mind of God which are unknown to us, and which we have no interest in understanding; still, we do not think of admitting that any of these purposes are in conflict with what he has revealed. He has purposes in relation to the planet Jupiter, but he has not revealed those purposes to us, for the sufficient reason that we have no interest in knowing what such purposes are. This will serve as an illustration. He has revealed the Scriptures to *us*, and not to the inhabitants of Jupiter—if we suppose even that it has inhabitants. Still, it would be difficult for us to believe that in the administration of the affairs of another planet he is unjust, cruel, oppressive—that his purposes, as developed there, are in conflict with his purposes as developed here. I say, farther, that with the knowledge which we now have, it would be impossible for us to believe it. These secret things, then, are not contrary to

any thing which God has revealed to us in his written word.

III. THE DOCTRINE OF DECREES OF GOD AS PRESENTED IN THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

I present a few sections from the chapter on "God's Eternal Decree," in the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church. I do this that different views may be placed side by side:

"God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet, so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreördained to everlasting death.

"These angels and men thus predestinated and foreördained are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and defi-

nite, that it cannot be either increased nor diminished.

"Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

"As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreördained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected are fallen in Adam; are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

"The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will,

whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for sin, to the praise of his glorious justice." *

"God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his own will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreördained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men.

"God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory, and, in Christ, hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof, and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will, (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favor as he pleaseth,) hath passed by, and foreördained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of his glorious justice." †

"The decrees of God are his eternal purpose,

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* Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church.

† Larger Catechism of the Presbyterian Church.

according to the counsel of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreördained whatsoever comes to pass." *

I do not introduce these passages for the purpose of commenting upon them. Certainly it would afford me no pleasure to stir up old waters of bitterness, and no such design is entertained. But I am not a Presbyterian—I am not an adherent of the Confession of Faith from which these extracts are made. Why am I not? The difficulties are found in the passages themselves, and in cognate passages which will come up hereafter. I am a Cumberland Presbyterian. Why?

1. If I say that "God from all eternity did unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass," *I, at least,* am compelled to admit that God ordained the introduction of sin—all the actual sins which have been committed from the bginning to the present time. These are events which have *come to pass.* I have my eye, of course, upon the restriction which is thrown around this broad statement: "Yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of creatures;

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* Shorter Catechism of the Presbyterian Church.

nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." Is there no difficulty in believing these statements consistent with one another? A man may say that "God ordains whatsoever comes to pass;" and then say that "God is not the author of sin;" and we may give him who so says the credit of believing what he says; still, the uninitiated mind will always falter. It will be very difficult to divest it of the impression that the two propositions are contradictory. I need not say that if contradictory, one of them is false.

2. If I say that "by the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory"—or on any other account—"some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreördained to everlasting death;" and that "these angels and men thus predestinated and foreördained are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased nor diminished," it seems to me that I am compelled to admit that all labor, effort, watchfulness, and prayer, in the matter of my personal salvation, are useless. I know well enough that the practice of good and wise men is

in conflict with their theory on this subject, but still I submit the question sincerely, whether my deduction from the theory is not legitimate. At least this is the impression which the theory will always make upon the common mind.

3. The doctrine of the passages which we are here considering throws too far into the background the practical truths of human freedom and human responsibility. If the destinies of men are unchangeably designed and fixed, what is human freedom worth? And what is the consideration in connection with human responsibility which can make an appeal to the heart and conscience available?

These and kindred doctrines created the difficulties in the Presbyterian Church which resulted in the organization, or rather, as I have said before, in the reörganization of the Cumberland Presbytery, out of which the Cumberland Presbyterian Church has grown. Did the good men who took the lead in the organization stumble where there was no stumbling-stone? And are Cumberland Presbyterians still making a distinction where there is no difference? The reader will judge.

4. Let us consider these questions for a moment practically. Do not the Scriptures universally teach that men may be saved if they will? Do they not clearly set forth that God wills the salvation of all men, but that some men do not will their own salvation? Does not the Saviour say: "Ye *will not* come to me that ye might have life"? Does not Moses speak thus to his people: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore *choose* life, that both thou and thy seed may live"? And Isaiah in the following manner: "If ye be *willing and obedient*, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye *refuse and rebel*, ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." It is not proposed to make an argument. I have already intimated this. But how can we be authorized to use so strong language concerning the purposes of God in regard to men and angels, as we find in the passages which we are considering, when we have such scriptures, and scores of others of similar import, before our eyes? God says, *I will;* but when we speak of his being *pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, to pass by*

the rest of mankind, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath, do we not say that *God will not?* I submit the question, whether the logic of these paragraphs, and the logic of the Scriptures, practically expounded, do not lead in opposite directions.

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon." What is the import of such a scripture? Is it not that if *man will, God will?* It seems to me that I need not reason on this subject.

IV. GOD CREATOR AND PRESERVER.

God is the creator and preserver of all things. He "created man in his own image." He "made man upright." When finished, all things were found to be "very good." God is the preserver of all things. Of men Paul says: "In him we live, and move, and have our being." God is said to *feed the fowls of the air;* to *beautify the lilies;* and to *clothe the grass of the field;* to *observe the*

falling of the sparrow, and to *number the very hairs of our head.* His providence is constant, careful, and ubiquitous. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall *thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*" "Except the *Lord build* the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the *Lord keep the city*, the watchman waketh but in vain." God does not create thought or feeling, but he creates him who thinks and feels. The same principle applies to choice and action. He overlooks every thought and affection, every choice and action. He assists our feebleness by his providence; directs our steps; by his own good hand restrains us in our waywardness, and "as a father pitieth his children, so he pitieth them that fear him."

V. SIN AND FALL OF MAN.

Man sinned, and fell from his primitive state. Our first parents not only sinned themselves, but

they involved their posterity in their sin and ruin. "By the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." By the sin of our first parents, "They fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body."

"They being the root of all mankind, by their sin all were made sinners, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature was conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

"From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions."*

No man who respects the Bible doubts that the first parents of our race sinned and fell. When we speak, however, of their sin's involving their

*Confession of Faith.

posterity, difficulties arise in some minds. It is not proposed to consider here all these difficulties, or, indeed, any of them, except such as may be relieved, in some degree at least, in a practical manner, and in a few words. And—

1. The scriptures which have been quoted settle the question most certainly, that the father of our race was in some sense the representative of the race in his first sin. In consequence of his sin, death has been entailed upon them. In consequence of his sin, human nature has become depraved, and men become practical sinners. It seems to me that these propositions are unquestionable. They are fully acknowledged in the passages here quoted from the Confession of Faith.

2. We have a practical illustration of the truth that the sin of our first parents involved their race. It is the following: God pronounced a curse upon the serpent, another upon the woman, and a third upon the man. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of

thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Now, it is very evident that all these maledictions are literally inflicted upon the descendants of those against whom they were pronounced. The woman is a sufferer, as it was said she should suffer. We are astonished when we compare what God said to our first mother in the garden with what her daughters have experienced for six thousand years, and still experience. The ground still produces thorns and thistles; man still secures his bread by his daily toil, and at length returns to the dust from which he was taken.

I have not thought proper to introduce the case of the serpent engaged in the temptation, and the overthrow of the first parents of our race. Dr. Dwight alludes to this subject very expressively. The following is a passage from him. Says he:

"The enmity which was announced, and which has existed between the seed of the woman generally—that is, mankind—and the seed of the serpent, has been a source of innumerable evils to the serpent. Animals of this kind have ever been peculiarly hated and hunted, peculiarly attacked, and destroyed from the beginning. Even the harmless ones do not escape. A war of extermination has plainly been declared against them, and carried on through all generations with unrelaxing and unceasing animosity. In consequence of this hostility, millions of them have probably perished which otherwise might have continued through the date allotted by Providence to their being. In the meantime, not a small number of the human race have fallen victims to the enmity of these venomous beings, and have usually been wounded in the very part of the body mentioned in this prediction."*

We infer from all these facts that the primitive sin involved more than the original parties. The Catechism describes the matter thus: "The covenant being made with Adam, not only for him-

*Sermon XXVIII.

self, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression."

3. It is not intended by all this that the posterity of Adam in any *real* sense committed his sin. He was, as I have said before, our representative. It is difficult to see how we can fail to feel the force of this truth. As our representative, he sinned for us; thus we sinned in him. He sinned for us, as Christ died for us. We sinned in him, in the same sense in which the believer obeys in Christ. The transactions are antithetical. The believer does not *really* obey in Christ, but is treated as though he had obeyed; so the posterity of Adam did not really or personally sin in him, but they are treated as though they had really and personally sinned in him. The terrible maledictions pronounced against the personal sinner fall upon us, because he was not only a personal but a representative sinner. The blessings of obedience come to believers, because Christ obeyed and suffered, not only personally, but representatively. The first Adam sinned for all; as we shall soon see, the second Adam died for all. He, however, becomes the actual Saviour of those only

who are renewed to life by the Spirit of divine grace. Some are so perverse and wayward as to resist the influence of this gracious messenger. Those resisting die.

VI. CHRIST THE REDEEMER.

Man sinned, but God provided a Saviour. This latter proposition brings forward the character and work of Christ as Mediator. The doctrine of the Confession of Faith is, that

"It has pleased God to choose the Lord Jesus Christ, who verily was foreördained before the foundation of the world, to be the Mediator between God and man—the Prophet, Priest, and King; the Head and Saviour of his Church; the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world; unto whom he promised a seed to be by him in time redeemed, called by his word and Spirit, justified by his grace, sanctified and glorified.

"Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man, and now makes intercession for transgressors; by virtue of which the Holy Spirit is given, to convince of sin, and enable the creature to believe and obey, governing the hearts

of believers by his word and Spirit, overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation."*

1. God foresaw the necessity of a Mediator, and prepared for it. Hence Christ is said to have been "foreördained before the foundation of the world." When the exigency arose, the Governor of the universe was not taken by surprise. When the pestilence came, the remedy was at hand. Whilst God did not ordain the existence of sin, he foresaw its existence from the beginning. A wise ruler reasons from the past and the present, and *believes* that certain events will occur; he prepares for those events. God, without the necessity of reasoning, knows intuitively what will occur in the future, and prepares for all.

2. Christ, the Mediator, was God, the second person in the Trinity, but became incarnate. In all the acts of his mediatorship he was, in fact, both God and man, and was so regarded in the Divine administration. This union of natures en-

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*Confession of Faith.

abled him to fulfill all the requisites of the great work upon which he entered.

3. He became a Prophet, to instruct men; a Priest, to atone and intercede for them; and a King, to govern them. In these capacities he has been actually acknowledged and received by the Church. He has become the Heir of all things, and been appointed to judge the world.

4. A seed was *promised* him in the beginning. This promise has been fulfilled from age to age, as the gospel has been preached, and men have been brought to the knowledge of the truth. Our worthy friends of the older school say that "God did, from all eternity, *give* him a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified." We choose to say that God "promised" him a seed in the *great primary transaction*, rather than that God *gave* him a seed, or a people, *from all eternity*. Our mode of stating the doctrine is certainly more practical; is it not also more scriptural? Let the reader examine.

5. Christ, in his state of incarnation, suffered death upon the cross. This was necessary, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. His

death in some form was evidently necessary, in order to the opening of the way for our return to God. He died, that we might live. Death was the appointed penalty of disobedience, and came upon him as a part of the terrible curse which followed the primitive transgression. It was not only a part, but the consummation of that curse.

6. Death was the appointed penalty of sin; still Christ was not a sinner. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Yet, in the expressive language of the apostle, *he who knew no sin was made sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* The case is an illustration of the principle already mentioned: Christ was not a sinner, but was treated as though he had been a sinner. He did not violate the prohibition in relation to the fruit of the tree in the garden, but he suffered the penalty of that violation—he was treated as though he had been the actual sinner. He was not a sinner, yet "the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with *his* stripes we are healed."

7. Christ by his sufferings and death made a full provision for the salvation of all men. The

Scriptures are very explicit on this subject. He "by the grace of God tasted death for *every man*." He "gave himself a *ransom for all*, to be testified in due time." "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the *world* through him might be saved." "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath *laid on him the iniquity of us all*." "If one *died for all*, then were all dead." In the latter passage the fact that *Christ died for all* is taken for granted. From this, as a premise, the apostle reasons to the conclusion that all were dead. "As by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the *free gift came upon all men* unto justification of life." Whom did the primitive "offense" involve? We have no difficulty in answering this question. It involved the whole race of the offender. The antithetical question is, For whose deliverance did the righteousness of the "one" make provision? Both questions are answered in the passage itself: "The free gift came upon *all men*."

8. This doctrine is distinctive. Let us place it side by side with the doctrines of the mother

Church on this subject. I quote from the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church:

"As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreördained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who *are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ;* are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. *Neither are any others redeemed* by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but *the elect only.*

"The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for *all those whom the Father hath given unto him.*

"*To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same;* making intercession for them, and revealing unto them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually per-

suading them, by his Spirit, to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by his word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation."*

Now, I have no word of reproach to utter in relation to the doctrine of these passages. It is, however, an ironlike doctrine. I respectfully press the question, whether it is not a philosophy rather than a theology. How can it be reconciled with the unmistakable theology of the passages of Scripture which I have just quoted? If Christ by the grace of God tasted death for *every man;* if he gave himself a *ransom for all;* if God sent his Son into the world to *save the world;* if he "laid on him the iniquity of *us all,*" how can it be that he died for "the elect only"?

9. If Christ died for all, then all may be saved. The death of Christ did not save all—did not save any. It was provisional; and, as we have seen, it was a provision for all. The great obstacle to our salvation, on the part of God, is

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*Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church.

removed. All the obstacles which remain are found within ourselves. These are moral, and can be removed by a proper agency. Now, if Christ by his death made provision for the salvation of all men, as far as God is concerned all men may be saved. If a suitable agency is provided for the removal of the obstacles which are found in man, then as far as man is concerned all men may be saved. Such an agency is provided in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, all men may be saved.

10. The death of Christ was an *intentional* provision for the salvation of all men.

First. The Scriptures seem to express distinctly such an intention. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What moved God to the gift? His love for the world. What was the object of the gift? What was the intention of him who made it? Is it not distinctly expressed? "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Is not the intention distinctly expressed here? And what was that intention? It seems to me

that but one answer can be given. The intention was to save the *world.* God our Saviour "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together." How can I doubt the mind of God in making the great provision, when I read such expressions of deep earnestness for the happiness and salvation of men as I find in these passages? Take into consideration also that the salvation of the world required no more suffering, no intenser agony, in no degree a more bitter death, or a greater profusion of blood, than would have been required for the salvation of half, or of the smallest fraction of the world. Consider, then, the deep and tender interest on the part of God in the salvation of perverse and wicked men, expressed in these passages, and let us ask ourselves if he would not probably--rather certainly—have looked to the

salvation of all men in the sacrifice of his Son. "He that spared not his own, but freely delivered him up for *us all*, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Was he not in earnest when he made such a sacrifice as he is here represented as making? The apostle says he "delivered him up for *us all*." What does the apostle mean? Is the "all" here restricted to the *chosen?* But in the other passages which have been quoted, it cannot be restricted to the *chosen*. Are we not, then, at liberty to interpret that, when the apostle speaks of "us all," he means himself and all other men?

Secondly. We receive the same impression with regard to the intention of God from the offers, invitations, and urgent calls of the gospel. These are made to all men, and made as though they were made in sincerity. This does not express the whole idea: they are made as though God felt a deep interest in their being accepted and obeyed. Is not this so? How can we doubt his sincerity, or the deep earnestness of his heart, when he addresses men in such language as the following? "Look unto me, and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth;* for I am God, and there is

none else." "*Ho, every one that thirsteth,* come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." This language embodies invitation, argument, and expostulation. It is affectionate and earnest. Did any reader ever seriously doubt its sincerity? "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let *him that is athirst* come; and *whosoever will,* let him take the water of life freely." "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, *If any man thirst,* let him come unto me, and drink." "Come unto me, *all ye* that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." It is certainly useless to multiply illustrations. We find them everywhere upon the surface of the Scriptures.

Thirdly. The commands of God are delivered

in the same spirit of affectionate earnestness. Said Paul in his address upon Mars' Hill, in reference to the former times: "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth *all men everywhere* to repent." "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" This is the language of tender expostulation. "Repent, and be baptized, *every one of you*, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins." "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." I have quoted this latter passage already, but it can hardly be presented and urged too frequently.

Fourthly. I need not multiply quotations. When God commands, does he not command because he ought to be obeyed? And how can we separate the ideas of obligation and ability? It is true, ability may be lost. It may be no longer inherent. In the case of man, it is not inherent—it has been lost; but God is gracious, as well as just; he is our Father, as well as our Sovereign

Ruler. Whilst he justly commands, he graciously bestows assistance in the fulfillment of what he commands. He says to the house of Israel: "Make *you* a new heart, and a new spirit." And again, he says to the same people: "A new heart also *will I give you*, and a new spirit *will I put within you;* and *I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh*, and *I will give you a heart of flesh.*" We know what he meant when he gave the command. He commanded what he had a right to command. We know what he meant, also, when he gave the promise. It was the promise of a kind and gracious Father and Saviour. "Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my words unto you." These scriptures embody the very essence of the evangelical theology. This theology is practical; it is also gracious. It presents God as our Creator, Lord, and Governor, requiring entire consecration of our hearts and lives to his service. It presents him also as our gracious Father, strengthening our weaknesses, subduing our opposition, and turning our affections, and thoughts, and lives into the channel of love and obedience.

These considerations awaken in my own mind an overwhelming interest, and leave the impression deeply fixed that God, in the great provision which he made in the death of his Son, not only made it ample for the salvation of our entire guilty race, but actually, or rather practically, looked in making it to the salvation of the race.

11. It will be said, however, that if God, in the sufferings and death of his Son, made an intentional provision for the salvation of all men, his intentions are, at least, partially thwarted, since all men are not saved. If it should be so said, let it be said. Does the objector understand the subject? Does he understand himself? In civil government are the intentions, the plans, the purposes of a ruler always fulfilled? Are not the most benevolent intentions often thwarted? If God dealt with men as he deals with matter, his intentions would never be thwarted. The sun, the planets, and the moon fulfill their respective appointments; they have done so from the beginning. They have never faltered, have never turned aside from their prescribed course. They never will falter or turn aside from this course until the strong hand of the Creator is laid upon them, and they are reduced

to annihilation, or turned to chaos again. The government of matter is a government of force exercised upon a passive subject; but the government of mind is a government of motives directed to an active subject; it is a moral government. In such a government the will, the intention of the governor and the governed, may be in conflict. The government of God over men is a moral government. It is useless to present arguments in support of this proposition. The Scriptures are full and unequivocal on the subject. Men are taught, counseled, warned, invited, urged, reasoned with, as moral beings. Consciousness teaches us that we have the power of choice. If these propositions are true, it is very evident that God may have one set of intentions, and we may have another. When we turn to the Scriptures we find that, in many cases, this is, in fact, the condition of things. He "sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." The intention of the Son's mission is distinctly expressed. It was the salvation of the world, but multitudes of men do not choose to be saved. Then there is a frustration of intention. Do facts disparage the character

and government of God? If not, a theory which implies that his benevolent intentions are thwarted is no disparagement of his character and government. "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." I *would* and ye *would not*. And yet he who used this pathetic apostrophe was the Son of God. He had all power in his hands; had expelled demons and raised the dead by a word; had opened the eyes of the blind by a touch; had said to the angry waves of the sea, "Peace, be still," and they had obeyed. Why did he not thus control the minds and hearts of the perverse and obstinate Jews? I have but one answer to offer: The Jews were treated as moral beings; they were governed by moral laws, and the sort of force employed in healing diseases, casting out demons, raising the dead, and calming the seas, was not adapted to such a government. Is not this the correct answer? Is it not a practical answer?

12. The government of all human beings is of necessity moral to some extent.

The parent is sovereign, an autocrat in his family. Still, he cannot control the wills, nor even the actions, of his children. He commands, but they may disobey; he may punish them for wrong-willing, or wrong-doing, but when he has done this he has exhausted his resources. The willing and the doing originate with themselves, and, aside from the restraint which punishment or the fear of punishment imposes, are absolutely beyond his control.

The sovereign of a country may be absolute, a despot in the fullest sense of the word; still, he cannot control the wills or the actions of his subjects beyond the point which has been mentioned in the case of a parent. If they choose the wrong, and do wrong, they can be punished, but the power of the ruler goes no farther. Absolute as the sovereign may be, the thoughts of the subject are free. These thoughts may be developed into purpose, and purpose into action. The action may be punished, and this is an end of the matter.

Now it seems to me that the principle involved can be understood. The explanation, if explanation is needed, is the following: Whilst the sov-

ereign is an agent, and uncontrolled, the subject, although controlled in a certain sense, as we have seen, is still an agent. He is subjective, but not passive. A machine composed of matter is both subjective and passive. But mind, however controlled, is never passive in the sense in which matter is passive. God is a sovereign, and he is thus in such a sense that none can say to him, "What doest thou?" In such a sense that "he giveth not account of any of his matters." Still, man is free in both choice and action. He is influenced, when influenced; is led, when led, by moral motives. If these lead him aright, it is well; if he is misled, he suffers the terrible consequences of his errors, or his follies, or his rebellion, as the case may be. Thus, from the very nature of moral government, God's merciful intentions may be thwarted; his goodness may be despised; but the infliction of his wrath no man meriting them may escape. God intended in the gift of his Son to save men. "The free gift came upon *all men.*" Many, however, contemn, and turn away from the gift. As a last resort—shall I use such language? I do use it. As a last resort, mercy gives place to judgment, and the suspended blow falls with

intensified force. Terrible is the doom of the guilty.

VII. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The work of Christ is succeeded by the work of the Holy Spirit. Our Saviour promised the Spirit as a consequence of his departure. "I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Again: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will lead you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

1. We receive the impression from these passages that the mission and work of the Holy Spirit has an essential connection with the mediation of Christ as our Intercessor, or Advocate, with the Father: "If I go not away, the Com-

forter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

2. A second impression is, that his office is threefold. He is a teacher. Holy men spoke in the word of inspiration, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost to speak. He is a Comforter. He is to serve as a substitute for the personal presence of the Saviour with his disciples. In this office he is to abide with the Church "forever." He is a reprover. "When he is come, he will *reprove* the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." In this office also we learn from scriptures, in both the Old Testament and the New, that his work is permanent. In the two first offices he stands related to the Church; in the third, he stands related to the world.

3. A question of great interest arises here: What is the extent of his relation to the world? How far does he operate as a reprover? We consider this question for a moment. "God so loved *the world*." "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that *the world* through him might be saved." "And when he—the Spirit—is come, he will reprove *the world*." The original terms are the same, as they are the

same in our version of the Scriptures. It seems to me unquestionable, that in the two first instances the term "world" is used in an unrestricted sense. I would not know how to restrict its sense in the other.

4. On this branch of the subject we have another very pregnant passage. Our Saviour himself seems to connect the mission and agency of the Spirit with his intercession: "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth." We keep the thought in mind of the connection between the intercession of the Son and the influence of the Spirit, and consider the scripture to which I allude. It is the following: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." The propitiation here mentioned is not the propitiation made by the death of Christ, but by his intercession, or advocacy. Certainly the former is the basis of the latter, but the latter is the propitiation to which the apostle refers. This propitiation, or intercession, is made, "not for our sins

only"—the sins of erring believers—"but also for the sins of the whole world." I have denominated this a pregnant scripture. It is so, for the reason that it teaches directly that the intercession of Christ extends to all men, and by implication that the agency of the Holy Spirit, which is connected with the intercession, extends to all men. We have seen that the mission of the Spirit was an answer to the Saviour's *prayer*.

5. I derive an argument from a fact which has great weight with myself, in support of the position which we are here considering. It is admitted that mankind are depraved. It is admitted, also, that the tendency of sinfulness and sin is to greater sinfulness and sin, unless constant and powerful restraints are imposed. Now, there are nations which certainly have never had a knowledge of the true God, and of true religion. They have been in this condition from generation to generation, for thousands of years. The question is, Why have not these generations become fiends, devils? They are fearfully ignorant, degraded, besotted; still they are not devils; they might be more malignant and fiendish than they are. Amongst the old Greeks and Romans it is

a matter of unquestionable history that some good and great traits of character developed themselves. They had not the ferocity of tigers and demons. Can we account for these things, without admitting that a silent and steady influence from God is constantly pervading the hearts of men—an influence unknown to the subjects themselves, but nevertheless real and effective, restraining, chastening, and subduing, and thus preventing society from becoming associations of fiends, and earth from becoming a hell? And if such an influence does exist and operate, where can it be found but in the agency of that Holy Spirit, a part of whose mission was to *reprove the world?* There are no restraining influences in hell, and therefore we believe that hell is constantly becoming more hellish; there are restraining influences over the hearts of men, and therefore the condition of men, however far from God, is still hopeful.

VIII. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT MORE PARTICULARLY CONSIDERED.

It is not doubted that the Spirit coöperates with the word, and that its more effective influ-

ence is connected with the word; but it is certainly a very limited view of the subject to restrict its influence to the word. The Spirit "worketh when, where, and how he pleaseth."

1. In our doctrinal symbols the operations of the Holy Spirit are set forth under the heads of "Effectual Calling" and "The Work of the Holy Spirit," in the following manner:

"All those whom God calls, and who obey the call, and those only, he is pleased by his word and Spirit to bring out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills; and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so that they come most freely, being made willing by his grace."* Again:

"The work of God's Spirit is the convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our will,

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*Confession of Faith.

whereby he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel."*

These doctrinal statements embody the following truths, which may be more distinctly presented:

First. Of those whom God calls, some obey, and others disobey. Are not the Scriptures full of this truth? Does not observation illustrate the same truth?

Secondly. Those who obey the call are brought by the guidance of the word, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ.

Thirdly. The Spirit commences his work by *convincing us of our sin and misery.* It is continued by *enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ;* in the *renewing* of our wills; in *persuading* and *enabling* us to embrace Jesus Christ as he is offered in the gospel; in taking away our heart of stone, and giving us hearts of flesh. We shall see, as we proceed, that he continues his work by helping our infirmities, guiding us in our

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*Catechism.

prayers, and "making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Fourthly. This work of the Spirit is carried so far that "all infants dying in infancy are regenerated, and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, where, and how he pleaseth; so also are others who have never had the exercise of reason, and who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word."*

Fifthly. This latter paragraph is a distinct statement of belief upon a very tender subject, in relation to which the Presbyterian Confession of Faith is certainly very unsatisfactory. We find it expressed thus: "*Elect* infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, where, and how he pleaseth. So are all other *elect* persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word."†

Now, an uninitiated reader, in examining this passage, receives at once the impression that if there are *elect* infants who, dying in infancy, are

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*Confession of Faith.

†Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church.

saved, on the other hand there are *non-elect*, or reprobate infants, who, dying in infancy, are not saved. The doctrine of infant damnation is disclaimed, however, by the highest authorities in the American Presbyterian Church, and I do not charge it upon them here. The explanation is, that *elect* infants are those who die in infancy. Still, it seems to me unquestionable that the men who compiled the Confession of Faith believed, and intended to teach what they *seem* to have believed and taught, that non-elect infants dying in infancy, and all other non-elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word, are lost. It is certain that the minds of the old theologians were in great confusion on this subject; and it is equally certain that many of the best of them regarded the condition of a portion of the infant race dying in infancy as hopeless. Augustine supposed that infants dying without baptism would experience the mildest form of damnation—*mitissima damnatione*. I bring up this subject here for the reason that it was one of the doctrinal difficulties which developed themselves into the formation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Allow it to

be repeated, however, that we do not charge an odious doctrine upon the Presbyterian Church. It is disclaimed, and we accept the disclaimer. Our controversy is not with the adherents of the Confession of Faith, but with the Confession of Faith itself. I have said that the Confession of Faith on this subject is unsatisfactory. I go farther: it is exceedingly objectionable. It requires too much explanation.

I may add, however, that since the explanation given reaches the same doctrine taught in our own Confession of Faith, it is a tacit acknowledgment that we have made an improvement upon the original, and that the modification ought to be substituted for the original.

IX. CONVICTION OF SIN, REPENTANCE, FAITH, JUSTIFICATION, CONVERSION, AND SANCTIFICATION.

From this influence of the Spirit of God, which we have been considering, proceed conviction of sin, repentance, faith, conversion, and sanctification. Intermediate between two of the steps of this process occurs justification; and between two others, adoption.

1. The first step in the process is conviction of sin. The mission of the Spirit to the *world* is to *reprove*. The meaning of this word, in the passage which describes the mission of the Spirit, is to *convince*. The truth of our sinfulness is brought home to the mind and heart. Our first parents were turned away from duty by falsehood, presented by one who had the power to deceive. We are to be turned back to duty through the truth, presented by an agent who has power to undeceive. The Holy Spirit is that agent. The word and providences of God teach. They embody the truth. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit. The Spirit makes the word effectual.

2. Repentance is the legitimate result of conviction. The term is here used in the extended sense of that contrition of heart and anguish of spirit experienced by those who have a just appreciation of their sins and sinfulness, and of the danger to which they are exposed in consequence of these. Connected with this experience is a serious and resolute purpose of amendment. The experimental exercise is somewhat thus: I see and feel that I am a wrong-doer; that my whole life has been a series of insults to Him who made

and preserves me; that my way leads to death; that the terrible justice of God is armed against me, with an avenging sword suspended over my head; that there is no hope for me but in unmerited mercy. With such an experience of my guilt and danger, I turn from my way with bitterness of soul, and with a broken heart. *This turning with bitterness of soul and brokenness of heart is repentance.*

3. A sinner's first thought is that he can save himself, or at least can contribute something to his salvation. Experience soon teaches him that he makes no progress in that direction. His strength is thoroughly tested; he exhausts his resources; he finds that he can do nothing. Christ is presented in the gospel as the ground of a sinner's hope. The pardoning mercy so greatly needed can be expected through him alone. Every other avenue is closed. A strong but sweet necessity drives him to Christ. He trusts in him as a Saviour; he accepts him as a Prophet, Priest, and King. He is a rebel no longer. He inquires with earnestness, as did Saul of Tarsus after a similar experience: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This surrender of the heart, *this act*

of trusting in Christ, is faith. It is not the receiving of the testimony concerning Christ, but the receiving of Christ himself as a Saviour.

4. Justification, pardon, follows. The doctrine of the New Testament is, that we are justified by faith. Faith, however, is only the medium; Christ is the meritorious ground of our justification. He "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Justification was the distinguishing doctrine of the Reformation. Luther considered it the vital principle of the Church. The Catechism describes justification thus: "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone."

The doctrine of imputation is brought out in this passage from the Catechism. It is understood thus: In consequence of what Christ has done and suffered, we having believed in him, having received him as our Saviour, are accepted, and treated as though we were righteous. This doctrine of imputation is consistent, throughout the whole scheme of Christian theology, in its applications.

First. The sin of Adam was imputed to his

posterity. They did not commit the sin, but have been treated as though they had committed it. We see this latter proposition fully illustrated in the infliction of the curse pronounced on his account, and against himself, upon his posterity. He was the actual sinner; his descendants with him are the sufferers. They are treated as though they had been the actual sinners.

Secondly. The sins of Adam and his posterity were imputed to Christ. *The iniquity of us all was laid upon him. He was made to be sin for us who knew no sin.* Christ personally committed no sin; he was, however, treated, and suffered, as though he had been a sinner.

Thirdly. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. We carry forward the principle of interpretation. In consequence of what Christ has done and suffered for us, we are accepted, and treated, as though we were righteous. We are, however, sinners still. We are infinitely below what the law of God requires. It is spiritual, perfect, and unsparing in its requirements; but we are imperfect, often unspiritual and remiss in our obedience. Still, we are accepted and treated as though we were righteous. We are justified; we

are treated as though we had fulfilled the law in all its requisitions. Hence we are said to be "complete in Him."

5. Conversion, otherwise denominated regeneration, is another step in this spiritual process. It is a vital step. It is the new creation: "If any man be in Christ he is a *new creature;* old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." "We are his workmanship, *created* in Christ Jesus unto good works." It is a new birth: "Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be *born again*." It is a passing from death unto life: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but *is passed from death unto life*." It is a spiritual resurrection: "If ye then be *risen with Christ*, seek those things which are above." All these expressions indicate the magnitude of the spiritual change which occurs in conversion. It is not a change of opinion on the subject of doctrinal truth. It is not a subjection of ourselves to any routine of gospel ordinances. It is not a change of external character and conduct merely, but a change which

reaches the heart, the affections, the seat of spiritual life. If our Saviour taught any thing, he taught that his religion was an internal, vital principle, subjugating, controlling, sanctifying the whole man. And if he denounced any thing, he denounced a reliance upon ordinances, rituals, and mere external pretension.

6. By adoption we become sons of God. Justification affects our *status* as members of the kingdom of God; adoption, as members of his family. The apostle sets forth the distinction very beautifully: "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but *fellow-citizens* with the saints, and of the *household of God*." Again, another apostle speaks of the sonship: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath upon us that we should be called *the sons of God*." "Beloved, now are we *sons of God*." Still again: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the *sons of God*." A result of this heavenly relation is the heirship: "If children, then *heirs; heirs of God*, and *joint-heirs with Christ*."

7. Sanctification is a fuller development, and a consummation of the work commenced in regeneration. "Sanctification is a work of God's free

grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto God." * "They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are farther sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them; the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces to the practice of holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

"This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." †

"The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection." ‡

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* Catechism. † Confession of Faith. ‡ Catechism.

First. I have said that sanctification is a fuller development of the spiritual work commenced in regeneration. The Scriptures represent this spiritual work sometimes as momentary, and sometimes as progressive. It is both momentary and progressive. Regeneration is momentary. It may be illustrated by the passing of a crisis in a disease. There is a point, an hour, a moment, in which the crisis is passed. The current of life which was running down is turned back. There is a decisive moment when this takes place. Still the returning current is weak, and there are obstructions. Sanctification is the strengthening of the current, and the removal of the obstructions. When the crisis of the disease is passed, health is not yet restored; restoratives are still necessary. The encouragement is, that *he who has begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* This passage, which I here substantially quote, has a pregnant sense: "He will go on with it unto, and finish it at, the day of Jesus Christ; he will carry it forward to its consummation." * We thus have here presented the com-

* Bloomfield.

mencement, the progress, and the consummation of the spiritual work by which we are prepared for heaven.

Secondly. "This sanctification is throughout in the whole man." Upon this point we may consider the following scriptures: "Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the *flesh and spirit;* perfecting holiness in the fear of God." "And the very God of peace *sanctify you wholly;* and I pray God your *whole spirit, and soul, and body be* preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thirdly. Sanctification affects especially what is denominated in the Scriptures the "inward man" and the "new man." "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the *inward man is renewed day by day.*" "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and be *renewed in the spirit of your mind;* and that ye put on the *new man,* which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on

the *new man*, which is *renewed* in knowledge after the image of him that created him." In this passage the putting off of the old man, and the putting on of the new man, are described as past actions, finished; the renewing as a present process, unfinished.

All these exhortations are addressed to those who had made some progress in the spiritual life, and describe what we call the process of sanctification.

Fourthly. This process of sanctification continues during life—is not consummated until the warfare of life comes to a close. The experience of most Christians, at least, is in conflict with any theory of a state of conscious, sinless perfection while in the flesh. I need not turn aside to consider every inquiry which might arise here. If we are sustained by the Scriptures in our explanation of this subject, we are certainly sustained also by an almost, if not an entire, uniformity of Christian experience. Whilst these things are so, we can well afford to submit the question without any thing farther.

X. PERSEVERANCE OF BELIEVERS.

The perseverance of believers in faith and obedience unto eternal life.—On this subject we teach thus:

"Those whom God hath justified and sanctified he will also glorify; consequently, the truly regenerated soul will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

"This perseverance of believers depends on the unchangeable love and power of God; the merits and advocacy of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit and seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth the certainty and infallibility thereof." *

1. We may observe on this passage from the Confession of Faith that it does not teach that believers *cannot* totally and finally fall away, but that they *will not.* This is evidently not a distinction without a difference. What is averred in the passage is, that "the truly regenerated soul

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* Confession of Faith.

will never totally nor finally fall away." The mode of expression is an improvement upon the corresponding passage in the Westminster Confession, in which the averment is that "they whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, *can* neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace." The latter mode of expression is objectionable, inasmuch as it seems to exclude human agency in the matter of our perseverance; whereas the former distinctly recognizes it. When I say that a Christian believer *cannot* fall away, I may mean that the impossibility is moral, but I may be understood to mean that it is natural. If my meaning is that the impossibility is natural, I exclude the idea of human agency; because a natural impossibility cannot be overcome by any degree of human agency. If my meaning is that the impossibility is moral, my mode of expression is unhappy, because I am liable to be misapprehended. I am, therefore, wrong in fact; or if right in fact, I must be embarrassed with a call for an explanation. I say nothing here of the embarrassment and confusion which such a mode of expression must introduce into the mind of

an inquirer after truth. If I say, however, that Christian believers *will* never fall away, I recognize their agency; since the exercise of the will is always embodied in what constitutes agency.

2. The doctrine of perseverance, as it is presented by Cumberland Presbyterians, is not an outgrowth of the doctrine of election. It has no connection with this latter doctrine. The most prominent writers of the High Calvinistic school consider that eternal sovereign election is the first link in a chain of which final perseverance is a necessary part. In the construction of our theological chain we do not need this first link; at least, we do not feel that we need it. Still, both Calvinists and Arminians urge the theory upon us that these two doctrines must stand or fall together, and that therefore there is no *medium ground* in theology—that if we admit the doctrine of perseverance, we must admit with it the doctrine of election, as taught by High Calvinists; and, on the other hand, if we reject the latter, we must reject the former. We shall see whether the one of these doctrines is an essential cognate of the other. In order to this, I inquire—

3. Is there not another scriptural basis upon

which we may construct an argument in favor of the doctrine of perseverance, aside from a decree of election? Let us consider this question.

First. Believers are *children* of God. In a certain sense all men are his children. I know that the term is figurative in such a use; but figures have some resemblance to facts. If all men are children of God, believers are his children in a peculiar sense. What, then, is my inference from this tender relation? Does my heavenly Father care for me? Let the Psalmist answer: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." This is a very impressive illustration of the tenderness and care which God exercises toward his people. A father, if he is not a monster, sympathizes with his children, and helps them in their helplessness. In like manner, God our heavenly Father pities those who fear him, for the very reason that we need his pity: "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that *we are dust*." Again: "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forsake her sucking child, that she should not have compas-

sion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." A more tender relation still is here used to illustrate God's care of his children. Maternal love is an expression of the most abiding affection. In most cases it is inexhaustible. Still the *mother may forget*—she may prove a monster; yet *will not God forget Zion his people.* Could I find language more encouraging? And yet these are specimens of the language in which God describes his tender and unwearied care of his children.

Secondly. I base an argument upon the intercession, or advocacy, of Christ. "Our salvation as sinners, and our perseverance and sanctification as Christians, have an essential connection with the mediation of Christ. This is a scriptural truism. *He came to seek and to save that which was lost.* The universal doctrine of the Scriptures is, that our pardon is attributable to his death. The righteousness of Christ, including what he did and suffered—while he was in the world—"as Mediator, is the meritorious ground of our acceptance when we come to God as penitent sinners. But Christ performs an additional work, as we have heretofore learned. He is *our Advocate* with the

Father; he ever liveth to make *intercession* for us." What is the object of this advocacy, as far as believers are concerned? Is it not to make their final salvation certain? What say the Scriptures?

Rom. v. 8–10: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, *we shall be saved by his life.*"

The reasoning of this passage is very plain. We were sinners in a state of rebellion. In our rebellion God loved us, and sent his Son to die for us. Through the death of the Son we are justified — saved from wrath. If all this was done for us while we were yet sinners, aliens, and rebels, much more now, having become reconciled, having become believers, children, we shall be saved through the life of Christ—by his intercession and advocacy. Here is a basis, and the chief, and of itself a sufficient basis, of our hope of perseverance. It is the *life*, or advocacy, of Christ. Again:—

Rom. viii. 32–35: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also *freely give us all things?* Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

We find a similar train of reasoning in this passage.

First. God bestowed his greatest gift—his Son.

Secondly. If he bestowed his greatest gift, he will surely bestow the less gifts—he will freely give us all things. Is not this a reasonable conclusion?

Thirdly. There is nothing objectionable in his bestowment of these latter gifts, since Christ has died, and established a medium of justification—*has magnified the law, and made it honorable.*

Fourthly. Christ has not only died, but *is risen again, and is even at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for us.*

Fifthly. If Christ has died for us, and has risen again; if he has established an adequate medium of justification, and we are justified; and if, in addition to all, he has ascended to heaven, and at the right hand of God maketh intercession for us, we have no reason to fear that any thing shall separate us from his love. Trials may come from tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, but they will come in vain. Having *loved his own, he will love them to the end.*

1 John ii. 1, 2: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an *advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

I have already explained that the "propitiation" here mentioned is the propitiation made by the intercession of Christ, and not by his death. On the ground of this propitiation, or advocacy, we hope for pardon and restoration, if any of us sin. The apostle speaks of believers, and the encouragement is given to them.

Heb. vii. 24, 25: "But this man, because he

continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

The leading thought in this passage is Christ's ability to save. "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." Why? Because "he ever liveth to make intercession for them." This continued intercession has for its object the salvation of believers—those who have come to God through Christ.

The same general thought is presented in the intercessory prayer of our Saviour, contained in the seventeenth chapter of John. We suppose this to be a specimen of his intercessory prayers now offered at the right hand of the Father. The following verses are especially worthy of consideration:—

John xvii. 20, 21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

Christ, in the immediate prospect of death, offered this prayer. He prayed not only for

his disciples who were about to be left to the fulfillment of their great and difficult mission, but for all those who might believe through them. He thus prayed for those who were to be his followers in all ages. Does he not continue such an intercession in heaven? And if so, will not his prayer be regarded?

This examination needs not be extended. I do not see how the leading truth presented in these passages can be overlooked. Should we even admit the existence of a decree of election, we should not find in it the basis of the doctrine of perseverance. We might find a connection—the dependence of the one upon the other in a favorite logic, but we would not find it in the Scriptures. According to these, our hopes of safety as believers are based primarily upon the love of God, our heavenly Father, but mainly upon the *life*, the *advocacy*, the *unwearying intercession* of Christ.

4. But there is an additional agency which gives additional assurance. I allude to the agency of the Holy Spirit. Whilst the Saviour fulfills his office as intercessor, or advocate working *for* us, the Holy Spirit fulfills his office, as far as we are concerned, working *in* us. Both are co-workers

with ourselves. In view of the coöperation of the latter, we feel the full force of the injunction, and also of the encouragement of the apostle: "My beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." But how can we "work out" our own salvation, however seriously and earnestly we may engage in it? The answer is given: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." I suppose every experimental Christian feels the necessity of this inworking. On the subject of the agency of the Holy Spirit, it may, in addition to what I have heretofore said, be remarked—

First. That it is general. He is sent *to reprove the world.* Hence we believe that in *some way* he operates upon all men. We do not pretend, however, to determine in *what way* he reaches the universal heart. Still he is to "reprove the world."

Secondly. That his mission is special. He is promised—

As a Divine guide. He was to *guide into all truth*, or rather *into all the truth.* Such promises relate mainly to the apostles and their inspiration.

As the great agent in the renewal of the heart.

The conviction and conversion of men are wrought by the Spirit, but it is very evident that the work of renovation is carried farther by the same Spirit.

Eph. iii. 14, 16: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to *be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.*"

Rom. viii. 26: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

When the Spirit is said to make intercession for us, the meaning is, that he works in us.

Gal. v. 22, 23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law."

It is evident that the fruits of the Spirit here mentioned are the productions of his abiding influence upon the heart, and not merely of its influence in regeneration.

It is furthermore evident, from all these passages, that the abiding influence of the Spirit upon

the Christian heart is a renewing influence. We are to be *strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man.* The Spirit is to *help our infirmities,* to *make intercession for us*—so to *work in us us to aid in our prayers.* The Spirit, by his abiding influence, is to produce *fruit.* He is promised furthermore—

As a Comforter. In addition to what we derive from his name in the promise, we have the following:—

Acts ix. 31: "Then had the Churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the *comfort of the Holy Ghost,* were multiplied."

Rom. xiv. 17: "For the kingdom of God is not in meat and drink, but in righteousness and peace, and *joy in the Holy Ghost.*"

I may add that in our Saviour's promise to his disciples, the Holy Spirit is not only denominated the Comforter, but the thought of his being a Comforter is made especially prominent.

The Spirit is said to *seal believers.*

Eph. i. 13: "In whom also after that ye were *sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.*"

Eph. iv. 30: "And grieve not the *Holy Spirit* of God, whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption."

Dr. Hodge says: "By this sealing believers are authenticated as the true children of God; they have the witness within themselves. They are assured of their reconciliation and acceptance. They are moreover marked as belonging to God. And they are sealed unto salvation; they are rendered certain of being saved. The sealing of God secures their safety."*

This sealing is an earnest of our inheritance, and is identical with the Spirit of adoption. The Spirit of adoption is mentioned in the following Scriptures:—

Rom. viii. 15–17: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the *Spirit of adoption*, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

1 John iii. 24: "And hereby we know that he

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* Commentary upon Ephesians.

abideth in us, by *the Spirit which he hath given us.*"

1 John iv. 13: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath *given us of his Spirit.*"

The doctrine of these scriptures is, that by the Holy Spirit we are assured of our sonship with God, of our consequent heirship with Christ, of our intimate and permanent connection with these divine personages. They describe our communion with the Father and the Son; they set forth that we are sealed by the Spirit to the day of redemption.

5. Upon these three great truths—the love of God our Father, the intercession or advocacy of Christ, and the inward working of the Holy Spirit—we base our hopes of Christian perseverance. Is it not a strong ground of hope? God our Father pities us as a natural father pities his children; the other agencies coöperate—the one working *for* us, the other working *within* us, but both working effectually. I do not feel under the necessity of seeking an anterior link in my chain of argument as a Christian believer. Does God love me, although unworthy? Does Christ intercede

for me in my weakness and my wanderings? Does the Spirit dwell within me, strengthening me with might in the inner man, and sealing me an heir of salvation? If so, I will hope; if so, it is enough. My philosophy might carry me back to a decree of election, but the Scriptures point me to God my Father, and to the intercessory throne. I am frail and sinful, although a believer. I am liable to be led astray every moment by my crafty adversary. But the Scriptures tell me that "if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father." They speak thus to me, too, as a Christian believer. They promise also another Comforter, who may *abide with us forever.*

I can rely upon nothing within myself—upon the strength of no inherent or communicated principle—without the abiding influence, the continual inworking of the Holy Spirit. I do not feel the necessity of going into eternity for an element in my theory of perseverance. In my own case I *do feel* the necessity of looking beyond myself, and all human agencies, beyond any "great ruling life-principle" implanted within me, to a divine coöperation. As I have said, these three great truths constitute the theoretical basis of the

doctrine of perseverance as I receive it. With such considerations before me, I would not know how to call it in question. My hope is in God my Father, in Christ my Advocate, and in the Holy Spirit the source of all my comfort and strength.

6. It will be perceived that in this theory believers are considered as believers simply, without any regard to the manner in which they have become such. I suppose them to be believers indeed, to be spiritually related to Christ, to be spiritually identified with him. The simple question is, Will this relation be continued? Does a Christian believer really *obtain everlasting life?* We hold that this is a scriptural question, and must be answered by the Scriptures themselves. Philosophy will afford us but little assistance; indeed, philosophy has never been able to settle the question of our immortality as rational beings, to say nothing of our spiritual immortality. It has speculated and hoped, but speculated and hoped only; it has settled nothing. Much less can it settle the question now under consideration. It must be settled by the Scriptures; it can never be settled otherwise.

7. If we allow the Scriptures to explain the

manner in which our immortality as rational beings is secured, they ascribe it to the agency of God. *In him we live, and move, and have our being.* This is true, both in regard to this life and the immortal life. Our immortality is secured by the power and the providence of God. In like manner, in the theory of perseverance, or perpetuity of our spiritual life here presented, it is ascribed to the agency of God. The Father works, the Son works, and the Spirit works. All these coöperate with the efforts of frail humanity, and give it strength. The end is gained by moral means, and in conformity with moral principles. There is no constraint, no pressure upon the will; the subject is free. No iron-ruling destiny prevails; we are bound to the throne, but by a ligament of love. Hence we are said to be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." We are "kept by the power of God"; but we are kept "through faith." We trust, and God never betrays a trust. Our perseverance, therefore, does not depend upon what God has already purposed, or done for us, nor upon our own indwelling holiness, but upon what our heavenly Father, our Advocate with

the Father, and the Holy Spirit are now doing, and will continue to do for us to the end.

XI. MORE DIRECT SCRIPTURAL PROOFS OF THE DOCTRINE OF PERSEVERANCE.

I have thus presented what seems to me the basis of a believer's hope of final safety. I might denominate it the theory of the doctrine of the "Perseverance of the Saints." If the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit interest themselves in promoting a believer's salvation, we would expect it to be secured. But do the Scriptures, in their farther developments, corroborate such an expectation? It has been said that the Scriptures must settle this question. What do the Scriptures teach? A few passages must suffice as a specimen:—

John x. 27, 28: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

These are the words of Christ. The passage teaches the following things:

First. The sheep—believers—*hear the voice* of the shepherd. This voice speaks to them in counsel, warning, reproof, encouragement. The shepherd *knows them*, and *calls them by name.*

Secondly. Hearing his voice, they *follow* him. They regard his counsels, warnings, reproofs, and encouragements, and obey him thus speaking.

Thirdly. Thus following—being obedient—they receive from him eternal life. *They may by no means ever perish, or destroy themselves.*

Fourthly. They shall not only by no means perish of themselves, but no one shall be able to *pluck them out of the Shepherd's hands. He is mighty to save.*

Fifthly. The Father who gave them to the Son is greater than the Son in his office of mediator, or shepherd — *is greater than all; and no man shall be able to pluck them out of the Father's hand.*

I do not know how stronger language could be used in support of a doctrinal truth. I may also add that it seems to me, if the Scriptures said no more upon the subject under consideration, this

passage would settle the question. I could not, at least, myself set it aside.

Jer. xxxii. 40: "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

This is a prediction directly relating to the theocratic Israel. We have evidence sufficient, however, that it relates indirectly, and in a more important sense, to the spiritual Israel. Two things are to be considered in this passage: the perpetuity of the covenant—it is "everlasting," not shadowy or evanescent in its character; the pledges of the covenant—"I will not turn away from them, to do them good;" and again, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." If my application of the passage is correct, it is exceedingly strong: "I will not turn away from them," and "they shall not depart from me." In both these scriptures the great end is represented as being attained upon moral principles. There is no infringement upon human freedom. The sheep *hear* the voice of the shepherd and *follow;* God puts his *fear* into the hearts of the people, and they *cleave* to him.

Rom. viii. 35–39: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord."

Upon this passage I content myself with a paragraph from Professor Stuart. Certainly I could not improve what the paragraph presents.

"The whole summed up together," says he, "and understood after the Hebrew manner of speaking, stands thus: 'The universe shall not be able to separate Christians from the love of Jesus, who died for them;' heaven above, and *Sheol* below, and other created things, constituting, in the language of Scripture, *the universe*. I prefer, however, the simple meaning of above and below: no time, and no space, can separate us; or, no

period of time, and no place, can occasion the disappointment of our hopes.

"This is indeed 'an anchor sure and steadfast, entering into that within the vail;' A BLESSED, CHEERING, GLORIOUS HOPE, WHICH ONLY THE GOSPEL AND ATONING BLOOD CAN INSPIRE."

Although I am content with this from my distinguished authority, I still add a single remark. This passage from the apostle is the conclusion of an argument on the subject of salvation by grace. It is a suitable conclusion. Our salvation is of grace in its commencement and consummation. If its consummation is certain, the certainty is secured by grace—the gracious interposition of the Advocate with the Father, and of the Holy Spirit; the one laboring for us, as I have already said more than once, and the other working in us. With the effectual coöperation of these, we may well be persuaded that neither heaven above, nor *Sheol* below—that neither time, nor space, nor occasion—will be able to disappoint our hopes; that an occurrence so disastrous to us will never be effected by any created thing. We may then triumphantly ask the question: "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Phil. i. 6: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

The confidence here expressed relates to Christians, and to Christians only. The good work has been commenced in them. Will it be consummated? Bloomfield says there is a pregnant sense in the passage, the full import being: *He who hath begun the good work will go on with it unto, and finish it at, the day of Jesus Christ.* I have alluded to this passage already. Was the confidence of the apostle misplaced? Was he mistaken? What says the earnest reader of the Scriptures?

Job xvii. 9: "The righteous shall *hold on his way*, and he that hath clean hands *shall be stronger and stronger*."

John iv. 13, 14: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him *shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life*."

1 Cor. i. 8: "*Who shall confirm you unto the end*, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I group these scriptures together as a matter of convenience. They certainly need no explanation. They speak for themselves. I add two more, and close:—

John iii. 36: "He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life.*"

John v. 24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath everlasting life*, and *shall not come into condemnation*, but is passed from death unto life.'

Can we misunderstand such language as this? The believer *has everlasting life;* he *shall not come into condemnation*, but *is passed from death unto life.* Upon the latter passage I add a quotation from Dr. Dwight.

"In this passage," says he, "it is declared that he that heareth the words of Christ, and believeth on him by whom he was sent, has passed from death unto life. What is meant by this phrase is also decisively explained when it is said, 'Every such person hath everlasting life;' and when it is farther said, 'He shall not come into condemnation.' But every Christian, when he becomes a Christian, hears the words of Christ, and believes

on him that sent him. Therefore, every Christian has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but has already passed from death unto life."*

As I have said, I close the brief scriptural argument which is proposed at this point. Many additional proofs might be offered in support of the doctrine which we are considering, but I do not think them necessary. If God speaks once, it is sufficient. He has spoken repeatedly, and distinctly. I do not know how we can misunderstand him.

XII. DIFFICULTIES OF THE SUBJECT, AND HOW TO TREAT THEM

I am well aware of the difficulties which lie in the way of our views on this subject. There are many scriptures which seem to teach the possibility and danger of a final apostasy on the part of a believer. He must be a very unfair expositor who will not acknowledge this. Still, the Scriptures do not contradict themselves. No Christian will make such an admission. What, then, are we to do in our expositions, when we

*Sermon LXXXVII.

find these apparently conflicting authorities? It seems to me that a faithful expounder has but one course before him. When scriptural statements are explicit, distinct, and often repeated, he must receive them implicitly. The conflict of other scriptures with such as these must be apparent only; it cannot be real. Such scriptures, and such statements as I have first mentioned, must be our exponents of the meaning of others less distinct.

Now, we apply the rule in the case before us. The scriptures here presented, and many others which might be presented, seem to me to teach, as explicitly as words can teach any thing, the prospective safety of believers. "The righteous *shall hold* on his way." "The sheep *shall never perish*," and "no man shall pluck them out of the shepherd's hands." "*No man shall pluck them out of the Father's hands.*" "I will not turn away from them to do them good," and "they shall not depart from me." "He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life.*" He *shall not come into condemnation.* On the other hand, we find various scriptures, and many facts, which seem to teach otherwise. Where am I to find

my guidance? Shall I use scriptures of doubtful import—scriptures which teach inferentially—in the exposition of those which teach distinctly and directly? This would be to throw darkness upon light, rather than light upon darkness. No serious man reasons thus upon other subjects. Since the Scriptures, therefore, teach—as they seem to me to teach—very clearly on the subject of apostasy and perseverance, I accept their teaching, and endeavor to explain other scriptures which are less clear, in conformity with what is clear. In such an effort I may not satisfy every inquirer; I may not always satisfy myself. But still, in regard to the main question, when the Scriptures speak as they do, how can I doubt? The explicit statements of God's word, and the whole economy of his plan of redemption, seem to point in one direction: "He that believeth *shall* be saved."

XIII. THE SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIED TO THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION, OR DECREES, AS PRESENTED BY THE HIGH CALVINISTIC SCHOOL.

I apply the same principle to another subject. Our friends of the High Calvinistic school teach that,

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others to everlasting death." That

"These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreördained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it can be neither increased nor diminished."

Now, it is very certain that the Scriptures do not directly and explicitly teach this doctrine. It is an inference from what is supposed to be their general teachings. It is a necessary link in a chain of doctrines which seems to the expounders of this school to be developed in the Scriptures. But there are explicit statements, promises, calls, warnings, encouragements, and threatenings, which are in plain conflict with all this. What am I to do? Am I to explain distinctly and repeatedly expressed statements, in conformity with what is certainly inferential, and at best darkly set forth, if set forth at all? God has nowhere said that such a certainty exists in the economy of his providence in relation to angels and men; but he has expressed himself in direct opposition to such

a theory in almost numberless instances. I find, therefore, but one course to pursue. I do not explain what is plain by what is, as I have said, at best obscure; but rather, I *endeavor* to explain what is obscure by what is plain.

But there is another link in this same chain. The number of elect men is *definite and certain*, and, according to the theory, Christ died for them, and for them only. The Scriptures, however, state explicitly that Christ died for all men; that he gave himself a ransom for *all;* that by *the grace of God he tasted death for every man.* How can I misunderstand such scriptures? Others equally expressive might be presented. I have but one choice in such a case. The difficulties which environ this whole subject will be readily acknowledged. Still, some things are plain, if others are obscure. We accept what is plain, and endeavor to walk by it. With regard to what is obscure, we would stand in awe, and wait for farther light. The scriptures have said that believers *shall* be saved, and I believe them. John the Baptist said: "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life." Was he mistaken? Who will take this ground? The same scriptures have

said that God "will have *all men* to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth;" that he "so loved *the world* that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" and I believe what he says. The same scriptures do explicitly say that Christ died for *all men*, and I believe those scriptures. I say with Paul: "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

XIV. THE OLD OBJECTION.

Still I am met with the old objection—which ought to have been worn threadbare long since—that there is no middle ground in theology; that I must be a Calvinist in the full sense of the term, a High Calvinist, or an Arminian in the same sense. Now I have to say, once for all—and I shall not repeat it—that if I stand upon the scriptures distinctly expressed and fairly expounded, I am quiet and confident. My worthy friends who walk in the light of Geneva, or who derive their light from Leyden, may have the full benefit of their respective theological luminaries. These are high authorities. I respect them, but

for myself I choose to follow the guidance of the Bible—an immeasurably higher authority.

XV. THEOLOGICAL TRUTH VITAL.

The preceding sketch contains an outline of my theology as a Cumberland Presbyterian. I have said that, whatever might be offered on the score of history, or of measures in commendation of Cumberland Presbyterianism, if its theology is found to be defective, if we do not believe and teach the truth, or at least what is an approximation to the truth, no other considerations are to be regarded. By the truth we are to stand, if we do stand; and in the want of it we are to fall, if we do fall. In regard to the truth of our theological teachings, as well as in regard to other things, the reader will judge. With a few more words I will submit the question. These words shall be practical.

XVI. PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF THE QUESTION.

Before dismissing entirely this part of my subject, then, I have a few words to say upon the

practical aspects of the theology presented here. It is not intended to be polemic in presenting any part of these thoughts; still it is scarcely possible to avoid the appearance of being polemic in such discussions. Let my reader, however, be patient; I shall at least be respectful. The theologies of our friends of both the High Calvinistic and Arminian schools claim to be biblical, and together they claim to occupy all the ground; they claim that there is no middle space between them. The expounders of these theologies seem studiously to forget—if a man can be said studiously to forget any thing—the doctrine of the old poet, who was, at least, sometimes serious and philosophical:

> "Rectius vives, Licini, neque altum
> Semper urgendo, neque, dum procellas
> Cautus horrescis, nimium premendo.
> Litus iniquum."

("He is wisest and safest who, avoiding extremes, seeks the golden mean.")

They seem to overlook what every serious man says and believes, that in a heated controversy truth will be likely to be found at some point between the extremes.

We have considered briefly the scriptural aspect of this subject. A theology which is true ought to be practical. If it is scriptural, we have the best possible reason for believing that it will be practical. It ought to meet the wants of men in every condition of life, and especially in the most trying exigencies of life. Will either of these extreme systems do this? It is not intended to appeal to vulgar prejudice, but I earnestly propound the question, Will they do this?

We take the case of a serious inquirer for the way of salvation. He applies to an expounder of the High Calvinistic school for counsel and guidance; and what does he get? He gets the offer of a Saviour, it is true; but this offer is accompanied, theologically and philosophically, with such restrictions and embarrassments as, if he understands them, to overwhelm him with confusion and discouragement, if not with despair. Is such a theology practical? Does it not break down in one of the most critical and pressing exigencies of human existence? Has not the practical minister found that some of the most difficult cases which he encounters in the course of his experience are the cases of those in whom the

ideas of a fixed destiny, and a limited provision in the gospel, had taken possession of the mind?

But again, we take the case of a sincere Christian in doubt and distress in relation to his spiritual condition. All Christians have such seasons. He applies to an expounder of the modern Arminian school. He needs encouragement. What encouragement does he receive? I forbear to press the question. My reader will understand me. Does the theology of his guide take him by the hand, and, applying the precious promises, lead him into *a large place?* Does it, can it, afford the relief which he so greatly needs?

Now, a serious man applies to a Cumberland Presbyterian. He is in distress; burdened with a sense of guilt; afraid he is hopelessly excluded from the provisions of salvation. He is upon the borders of despair. What does the theology of this new guide say? "Fear not; Christ died for sinners, for the chief of sinners, for every sinner of our race. The great provision is ample. 'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the *world* through him might be saved.' 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' God so says, and he means what

he says. You need not hesitate; give your heart to God; 'believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,' and your acceptance is certain. You feel that you are helpless: ask for help, and you shall surely receive it. God chooses that you should live, and not die. Why, therefore, will you die?" There is no hesitation in all this; not a thought connected with it which can possibly operate as an embarrassment. Is not such counsel the very counsel needed to lead an anxious, trembling sinner to Christ?

We take also the case of a Christian believer who has fallen into doubts and distress. What does this theology say to him? "If you are a Christian; if you have trusted in Christ; if you have ever had the witness of the Spirit, be hopeful. God is your Father; Christ is your sufficient Advocate before the throne; the Holy Spirit is sent to aid you. You are afraid you will fall at last by the hand of your great enemy. Fear not; he is a conquered enemy. The lion may roar, but it is only to frighten. God your Father will never leave you, nor forsake you. Your Advocate will never forget you. Darkness may continue for the night, but light will come in the

morning. Cheer up, doubting, fainting pilgrim; your redemption is nearer now than when you first believed." Is not such counsel adapted to the exigency? Now, it appears that in both these cases encouragement can consistently come, and does actually come, from the same quarter, and it comes precisely when and where it is needed. This is a practical aspect of the theology of these "Thoughts and Reasonings," in its most distinctive features. Is not a practical theology what men need? I say nothing farther of the insufficiency of the extreme systems to meet the wants presented here; but I do say that the medium system does meet both these exigencies at the right time, at the right point, and in the right manner.

It will be observed here that I speak of theologies, and not of men. In a great many cases, doubtless, men are better than their creeds. Warm hearts, generous natures, and, above all, the elevating and sanctifying influence of religion, lift them above their logic and their philosophy. They preach, and pray, and feel as though they believed that, after all, salvation has been provided for every sinner of the human race, and is, by the aid of the good Spirit of God, within his reach;

and, on the other hand, that, dark as the cloud may sometimes be which envelops a Christian believer, still that believer stands upon a rock. Undoubtedly, in our best spiritual moods this is the theology of our hearts, however the logic of our creeds may decide. Have we not a right to consult our hearts, as well as our minds, in the formation of our religious belief? I do not say that the heart is to govern; but still, who will say that its decisions are to be wholly overlooked? It needs not be said, because practically they will not be overlooked.

BAPTISM AND PRELACY.

On these two subjects a few words may be added.

XVII. BAPTISM.

On the general subject of baptism we stand upon the common platform of Pedobaptists. I present a few thoughts, however, in which I may occupy common ground with my Pedobaptist friends, or I may not in every particular. They are my own thoughts.

1. Baptism is a symbolical purification. Every

other explanation of the rite seems to me radically at fault, if it does not render the ordinance unmeaning and ridiculous.

2. If it is a symbolical rite, the quantity of water, or the mode of its application, does not really enter into the question of its validity. A spoonful is as distinct and intelligible a symbol as any quantity, however great. Consider the quantity of bread and wine used in the Lord's-supper.

3. Spiritual purification is universally represented in the Scriptures as the result of the action of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit in such action is universally represented as being *poured out*. My reasoning, therefore, is, that baptism by pouring is consistent baptism, and that no other is consistent.

4. It seems to me almost self-evident that baptism, as administered by the apostles, at least on the day of Pentecost, in the case of Saul of Tarsus, and of the jailer at Philippi, could not have been by immersion. The circumstances forbid the supposition.

5. I have, on two occasions, in the course of a ministry of a greater number of years than God in his providence allots to most men, administered

baptism by immersion in order to answer the demands of what seemed to be "a good conscience." I might do so again, but hope the necessity will never arise. My Confession of Faith would justify me in doing so, but does not require it. Consistency requires a different mode.

6. All attempts to make the validity of the ordinance depend upon what is called "the action of baptism" I think must fail. An action, and the object of an action, are two things; and philosophically, the latter is the more important—is, in fact, every thing in what is spiritual. In the case under consideration, I certainly think that the Scriptures and philosophy are in agreement. The object of baptism is to symbolize purification. Water is the symbol, and not the quantity, nor the manner, of its application.

7. Multitudes of cases are constantly occurring in which the administration of the rite by immersion is inconvenient; in some, impossible; in many other cases it cannot be thus administered, unless at the peril of health and life.

8. The circumstances almost necessarily attending the administration of this rite by immersion have always seemed to me unsuitable to the dig-

nity, solemnity, and delicacy of a Christian ordinance. "Let all things be done decently, and in order." Is not some importance to be attached to this aspect of the subject?

9. The undue importance attached to immersion is calculated to mislead the minds of well-meaning but uninstructed people. It is the most natural thing in the world for such persons to seize the shadow for the substance. It is an easier matter for a man to submit to an ordinance, however inconvenient, than as a thoroughly subjugated sinner to give his heart to God. I do not intend to be offensive, but must be allowed to say frankly that the impression has been taking a deeper hold upon me for years that the interminable pressure which is brought upon the public mind, in relation to this ordinance, and especially the mode of its administration, is producing its legitimate fruit in this country.

10. I sincerely believe that the manner in which this subject is presented by many men, all over the country, converts it into a yoke upon the Christian conscience. Instead of baptism's being held up as the initiatory rite into the kingdom of God on earth, and a symbol of that spiritual

change which fits us for fellowship with God's spiritual Israel, it is made to be felt and considered the stepping-stone to salvation, and that which gives a title to the kingdom of God in heaven. Good people are made to fear that, if they are not baptized in a particular manner, they may forfeit their hopes of heaven. This is the miserable fruit to which I allude.

11. I readily admit that baptism by immersion was early introduced into the Church. I think, with a respectable authority,* that it was most likely one of the first errors which was thus early introduced. It brought a sisterhood with it—immersion in a state of nudity, trine immersion, and baptismal regeneration. The two former were foolish errors; the latter was fatal, and will always be fatal.

12. Infant membership in the Church was evidently not only allowed, but enjoined, under the theocratic dispensation. No man can assign a reason why the same should not be both allowed and enjoined under the Christian dispensation. Has not the Church been a permanent institution? Are not

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* Coleman's Ancient Christianity Exemplified.

"we the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise?" Paul says we are, if we are Christ's. Did God embrace the seed of Abraham in the promise, and does he exclude ours from the promise? Certainly *we* are the seed of Abraham: does the promise extend only to *us*, and not to our seed?

13. Christ, when in the world, took little children in his arms, and blessed them, and said of *such is the kingdom of God.* Household baptism occurred frequently under the ministrations of the apostles: the inference is, that there were young children in those households.

14. It is certain that when Gentiles came into communion with Jews as proselytes, whole families were baptized, both parents and children.

15. It is certain that infant baptism was practiced in the early ages of the Church. If the anti-pedobaptist gains any thing from the historical argument in favor of immersion, he certainly loses more, from the same argument, in the controversy on the subject of infant baptism. This, however, is not the place to examine the weight of historical authority which is respectively due in these two cases. But it is certain, if all respectable Church-history is not at fault, that infants were

baptized by the fathers of the Christian Church. The rite thus administered is as old as the age of Cyprian and Tertullian, if not of Irenæus, who was separated by but one age from the apostles.

XVIII. PRELACY.

On the subject of prelacy a few words will suffice.

1. The writers of the New Testament evidently used the terms presbyter, or elder and bishop, interchangeably. An elder was a bishop, and a bishop was an elder. A bishop was not a prelate.

2. In the progress of things, prelacy grew into use as a matter of convenience. Of course it was in favor with prelates themselves. I suppose the first development of the human heart is in the direction of property, and the next in the direction of power. Prelacy gives power and importance to the prelate.

3. If prelacy were exercised now as a matter of convenience, no one would—at least, no one should—complain. But when prelacy assumes to itself the exclusive right of ordination, and thus of giving validity to the sacraments of the Church,

a validity denied to others, we pronounce it an arrogant assumption. Prelacy thus says that where there is no prelatical bishop there is no Church, no Christian ministry, no Christian sacraments; and it comes as near saying as public sentiment will tolerate, that there is no salvation. In the Roman Church, where this system of Church order is fully developed, the exclusive ground is distinctly taken.

4. It needs not be concealed, and I do not conceal it from myself, that our friends of the immersionist school logically suspend the hopes of heaven upon the mode of administering an ordinance; whilst our friends of the prelatical school logically suspend the same hopes upon the efficacy of priestly authority. I do not say nor believe that the mass of immersionists or prelatists in their hearts receive the logic of their respective theories. Many of them—shall I not say the great body of them—are among the best Christians in the land. I speak not, therefore, of the people themselves, but of the logic of their respective theories. It is well that principles do not always work themselves out in practice. It is to be hoped that they will not do so in these cases. I

involuntarily shrink from what it is plain the result would be. Romanism would certainly be greatly strengthened on the one hand, and the *new reformation* on the other.

XIX. SUMMARY.

I now close "my thoughts and reasonings" with a few remarks, in which I shall endeavor to condense the leading principles which have been considered.

1. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church originated in a great revival of religion, which extended over what was then the South-western portion of this country, being principally confined, however, to Kentucky and Tennessee. This revival, as far as human agency was concerned, was originated and carried forward mainly by Presbyterian ministers.

2. The multiplication of converts, the establishment of new congregations, and the general religious interest awakened in the country, created a demand for more ministers than the ordinary course of training in the Presbyterian Church could supply.

3. To meet this necessity, men were brought into the ministry under the provision in the Book of Discipline for extraordinary cases. Difficulties arose out of the measure, and these difficulties, in connection with others, which were doctrinal, resulted in the organization of a new Presbytery, or rather in the reörganization of the old Cumberland Presbytery. This was the beginning of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

4. Presbyterianism is better adapted to the full development of the religious mind than any other form of ecclesiastical order, and Cumberland Presbyterianism is better adapted to the condition of general society in this country than any other form of Presbyterianism.

5. A leading feature of Cumberland Presbyterian preaching is the earnestness and distinctness with which it presses the necessity and living reality of experimental religion. "Ye must be born again" is a favorite text with the youthful ministry.

6. Cumberland Presbyterianism embodies, and its ministers preach, the system of doctrine of which the universal depravity of the human heart, and a rich provision for the salvation of men

through the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, are leading features.

7. Cumberland Presbyterianism rejects the doctrine of election, interpreted in such a sense as to make the salvation of a definite number of men and women certain and unchangeably fixed, and the damnation of all other men and women as equally certain and unchangeably fixed. On the contrary, it maintains that the Saviour died for all men, and that all men may be saved through him. This salvation is rendered practically possible through the agency of the Holy Spirit, who has been sent that he may reprove the *world*.

8. Cumberland Presbyterianism rejects the doctrine of a final apostasy. Believers, if they chose to do so, might fall away and be lost; but through the unfailing love of God their Father, the intercession of the Son, and the inworking of the Holy Spirit, they are kept from fatal sin.

9. Cumberland Presbyterians believe that the different parts of their theological creed are consistent and coherent; still they are not so careful to preserve theological coherence, as to follow the explicit, and, what seems to them, the unambigu-

ous, guidance of God's word. "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

10. Cumberland Presbyterianism rejects any form of ecclesiastical order, or religious worship, which develops a tendency to lead the mind from substance to shadow, or introduces any necessary agency between an earnest and penitent sinner and God his Saviour.

XX. CONCLUSION.

I now close. I stand upon this platform—have stood upon it for many years, and through many discouragements and trials. I am certainly far from *glorying in men*, but the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was the outgrowth of a great providential necessity. It has thus far fulfilled a useful mission. It might, however, have been more useful, had it been more consecrated to its work. Will not its spirituality be increased? Will not the ties of Christian and ecclesiastical brotherhood be strengthened? Will we not strive to develop all the resources of our Communion? Let us look at the great field before us. *How white! How white! How ready for the harvest!*

Can any man among us relax his efforts, withhold his money or his coöperation, clamor for ease and indulgence, when our great enterprises are struggling for life, and men everywhere are rushing headlong to perdition? Will we not rather, in its full spirit, adopt for the measure of our efforts the earnest language of the prophet: "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace; and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

THE END.

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